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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Provisional agenda and organization of work

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Challenges to and opportunities for public administration in the context of the financial and economic crisis.

Documentation

The Secretariat will submit a paper for discussion on challenges to and opportunities for public administration in the context of the financial and economic crisis (E/C.16/2010.2). Based on the parameters set by the background paper, the Committee will determine the key public administration issues emerging in relation to the financial and economic crisis. It will also identify policy options and recommendations for Member States, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, aimed at assisting Governments to emerge from the crisis and renew efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

4. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance.

Documentation

The Secretariat will present the activities proposed for implementation by the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance in the next biennium, 2010-2011 (E/C.16/2010.3). The Committee will also review the main activities to be implemented under the Programme during the 2010-2011 biennium, with a view to making recommendations for the Secretariat in assisting Member States to tackle concerns of global importance and be aware of emerging issues related to public administration and its role in promoting innovative solutions to problems.



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5. Public administration perspective on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women.

Documentation

The theme of the 2010 annual ministerial review of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council is implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women. The Secretariat will submit a background paper on information and communications technology and gender equality: new opportunities and challenges for public administration to implement the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/C.16/2010/4). The Committee will discuss and make recommendations on Government policies and governance strategies aimed at taking advantage of information and communications technology to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

6. Proposed programme of work and agenda for the tenth session of the Committee of Experts.

The Committee of Experts will review its programme of work and make recommendations to the Economic and Social Council on the agenda for its tenth session.



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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Challenges to and opportunities for public administration
in the context of the financial and economic crisis**

Challenges to and opportunities for public administration in the context of the financial and economic crisis

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The global financial and economic crisis since late 2007 has had a significant negative impact on the income, wealth and living conditions in both developed and developing countries. The crisis has also had an impact on public administration, especially on the implementation of social and economic policies and its economic functions more generally.

The present note by the Secretariat is intended to provide members of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration with background information for their deliberations during the ninth session, on the basis of the themes that some Committee members identified for the Secretariat as being of major relevance for consideration at that session. The crisis presents not only challenges, but also some opportunities for public administration as a tool for sustainable, inclusive and equitable development. Public administration is in need of reform, transformation and the adoption of measures that will not only contribute to a recovery from the crisis in the short or medium term, but also help achieve better sustainable, inclusive and equitable development.

* E/C.16/2010/1.

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I. Introduction

1. Since late 2007, the world economy has been experiencing one of its greatest crises since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Many of the major economies fell into recession; most developing countries have seen growth fall, although not as much as some economies in transition. Governments at both the national and subnational levels are facing huge financial constraints in fulfilling their functions and are under pressure to adapt to the new circumstances and to become more effective institutions for development in the future.¹

2. The crisis has resurrected a debate about the economic role of public administration. Since the late 1970s, the debate has been strongly tilted towards the private sector and market-driven management approaches. The call to reduce State interventions in economic matters was followed in many countries, privileging the private sector as the engine of economic growth. The present note by the Secretariat focuses on how the government sector has been affected by the crisis in the majority of countries and how public administrations are responding and may evolve in the longer term as agents of development. The purpose of the note is not to provide a full analysis in this regard, but rather to offer some elements for experts from diverse countries to use as a basis for a discussion on the matter in seeking to identify a variety of public sector responses to foster development both in the short term (overcoming the crisis) and in the medium and long terms (achieving sustainable and inclusive growth in the post-crisis era).

3. The note seeks to contribute to the international dialogue on economic and social issues of central importance for development worldwide, which is ongoing in the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council. In particular, the note is provided by the Secretariat, through the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, as background material for the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, a specialized subsidiary body of the Council. It is intended to facilitate deliberations among the members of the Committee during its ninth session, to be held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 19 to 23 April 2010. In turn, those deliberations will contribute to the publications of the Secretariat throughout 2010-2011. In this way, the views of Committee members will also help foster analyses in other forums and institutions, including in academia.

4. Even though several early indicators show that recovery from the crisis is imminent in some advanced economies and in India and China as at the start of 2010, there is still uncertainty about the sustainability of such a recovery.² The Committee and the Economic and Social Council can assist Member States by

¹ For comprehensive analysis of the world economic and financial crisis and its many implications, see the report of the Commission of Experts of the President of the United Nations General Assembly on reforms of the international monetary and financial system, available at www.un.org/ga/president/63/interactive/financialcrisis/PreliminaryReport210509.pdf; *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2009* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.II.C.2); the report of the Secretary-General on the world economic and financial crisis and its impact on development (A/CONF.214/4); and *World Economic Situation and Prospects: Update as of Mid-2009* and *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2010: Global Outlook*, pre-release, both available at www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.

² *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2010: Global Outlook*, pre-release, available at www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.

summarizing and analysing the main lessons learned from the crisis with respect to the role of public administration, not only in terms of concrete measures to strengthen and accelerate recovery in the short term, but also with regard to how countries can improve their public administration in order to best contribute to sustainable, inclusive and equitable development for all in the long term — hence the reference in the title of the note to the challenges to and opportunities for public administration.

II. The 2008-2009 global financial and economic crisis and international actions to overcome it

5. The present section provides a succinct explanation of the crisis, presents a few key statistics with which to assess it and summarizes the main international efforts to overcome the recession, mitigate its effects, act upon its causes and build better foundations for the future. Given that the present note addresses neither the causes of the crisis nor the policies required for recovery, but challenges to and opportunities for public administration in the context of the crisis, readers interested in more in-depth analyses should refer to other publications that directly address the former issues.³

6. Since late 2007, the world economy has been going through a deep economic recession — the worst since the 1930s in terms of the decline and the geographical spread. Indicators include the following:² in 2009, gross national product declined in real terms by 3.5 per cent in the developed economies, 6.5 per cent in countries with economies in transition, 2.1 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean and 1 per cent in Western Asia; in other developing regions, while output did not contract, growth rates decreased. Initial estimates show that poverty headcount rates increased significantly in 2009 compared with 2008, by 46.7 million in the developing countries (28.5 million in East and South Asia, 13.9 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 3.3 million in Latin America and the Caribbean and 1.3 million in West Africa). Trade flows had declined at an annualized rate of 30-50 per cent by the end of 2008/early 2009, in particular in Asian economies.

7. The origins of the recession can be traced back to major problems in the financial sector in the United States of America. A large quantity of bank assets consisting of mortgage loans were converted by financial intermediaries into a variety of innovative secondary securities, which in turn were sold in the financial market, attracting large amounts of savings from investors around the world. Since the exchange of assets proved very profitable, the phenomenon continued and grew considerably, creating a financial bubble.

8. Motivated by high profits in those secondary financial operations, financial intermediaries of various types, in particular large banks, pushed the supply of loans for housing until interest rates were very low — even lower than the loan rates offered to high-quality debtors (i.e., prime rates), although loans were being granted to creditors with higher-risk qualifications. Risk analysis was widespread, but attention was concentrated mostly on the secondary instruments' risks and much less on the risks of the underlying house loans. Thus, buyers of secondary securities were not fully aware of the total risks as these financial instruments became

³ The bibliography to the present report contains a list of publications and articles on the subject.

increasingly complex, and neither private rating companies nor public authorities provided sufficient information for the market participants. It was later recognized that official regulators had not acted promptly at the time the financial bubble was growing, assuming that the financial intermediaries themselves would have acted out of self-interest to adopt measures to prevent a crisis. At the same time, it became clear that the rating agencies had a conflict of interest, as they had a close, ongoing working relationship with the largest mortgage-backed security and collateralized debt obligations issuers. The current crisis is thus the result of regulatory failure.

9. The collapse a leading finance house, Lehman Brothers, had a system-wide domino effect, leading to a series of defaults on mortgage loans. As a result, a number of big banks began to go into severe balance-sheet disequilibrium, resulting in bankruptcy or near-bankruptcy, not only in the United States but also in other countries where banks acquired the complex United States financial assets. It was only then that government decided to intervene, contributing with public funds to strengthen the capital of major troubled banks to avoid further repercussions such as might result from generalized bank runs or a financial crash.

10. As non-institutional financial investors became aware of the losses incurred in terms of wealth, they had to rapidly increase precautionary savings to deal with the impact of the financial crisis. This meant that they had to cut expenditure on goods and services. The decline in net worth of wealth itself had a negative impact on expenditure. Demand began to fall and the recession affected an increasing number of sectors; thus, the financial crisis evolved into a broader economic crisis.

11. The economic crisis was transmitted to many developing countries around the world through a number of channels: decreases in international trade, diminishing international tourism, falling commodity prices, capital outflows to safer countries, increased interest rates, shrinking migrant remittances and constraints on international aid and official development assistance. The crisis thus assumed truly global dimensions.

12. As a result of the economic downturn, unemployment and underemployment increased very significantly in most countries, both developed and developing.⁴ As a result of job losses, considerable numbers of people fell into poverty. This set back the fight against hunger and the creation of decent jobs.⁵ In addition, social protection measures in developing and developed countries came under serious pressure. Most countries will have to grow vigorously during the period 2011-2015 just to recover the jobs already lost. The accomplishments made towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in many countries have thus been undermined.

13. The debt levels of the heavily indebted poor countries, including those that have benefited in the past from debt relief initiatives, are increasing. Relief measures for low-income countries have therefore been given consideration in international debates. With regard to measures to facilitate finance for the recovery

⁴ International Labour Organization (2009), "Recovering from the crisis: a global jobs pact", adopted by the International Labour Conference at its ninety-eighth session, 19 June 2009 (ISBN 978-92-2-120671-2).

⁵ Ravallion, Martin, "The crisis and the world's poorest", *Development Outreach*, World Bank Institute, December 2009; and Vos and Sánchez (2009), "Impact of the global crisis on the achievement of the MDGs in Latin America", Department of Economic and Social Affairs working paper No. 74 (ST/ESA/2009/DWP/74).

of the global economy, the countries of the Group of 20 (G-20) have provided their views to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).⁶

14. As the crisis reached global proportions, international conferences were held at the United Nations, including at the International Labour Organization (ILO), and several summits of the G-20 were held in 2008 and 2009 (in Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh, United States, and in London). It has been agreed that further meetings will be held in New York, the Republic of Korea and France in 2010 and 2011. Declarations have been adopted to end protectionism in international trade, defend jobs and create early warning or monitoring systems under the auspices of the United Nations in order to prevent the occurrence of similar crises in the years to come.⁷

15. A number of domestic measures have been adopted in various economies on several fronts. First, in order to prevent the further collapse of the financial sector, insurance mechanisms have been introduced for savings accounts to benefit the public and avert financial panic and runs; public funds have been injected into the capital of large banks and other intermediaries to prevent bankruptcies; and investigations have begun into flaws in financial regulations with a view to their subsequent reform. Secondly, in order to stimulate aggregate demand and prevent the further deepening of the recession, public expenditure programmes have been put into effect, including by implementing planned investments in, inter alia, school maintenance and enhancement, environmental and energy infrastructure and science and technology to increase competitiveness. Thirdly, in certain countries, support has been provided to domestic industries considered strategic because of their contributions to employment or innovation, such as the automobile industry. Fourthly, open market operations have been introduced in the money and foreign exchange markets, to prevent bubbles and maintain the stability of interest and foreign exchange rates. In some cases, the way in which such measures have been implemented has raised public concerns about transparency, and there have been calls for the equitable distribution of stimulus packages. In other cases, the substance of the policies has been debated: for example, support for strategic industries entails protectionism that may adversely affect the international trade system.

16. Early in 2010, several leading economic indicators signalled that the worst phase of the crisis may have already ended in some advanced economies and that recovery may soon start in those countries at a slow and gradual pace. However, there is still considerable uncertainty about the sustainability of the incipient

⁶ See the declaration issued at the Washington, D.C., summit on financial markets and the world economy, held on 15 November 2008; "The global plan for recovery and reform", issued at the London summit, held on 2 April 2009; and the "Leaders' statement" issued at the Pittsburgh summit, held on 24 and 25 September 2009.

⁷ See International Labour Organization, "Recovering from the crisis: a global jobs pact", adopted by the International Labour Conference at its ninety-eighth session, 19 June 2009 (ISBN 978-92-2-120671-2); *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2010: Global Outlook*, pre-release, available at www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp; and the following statements by the Group of 20: declaration issued at the Washington, D.C., summit on financial markets and the world economy, held on 15 November 2008; "The global plan for recovery and reform", issued at the London summit, held on 2 April 2009; and the "Leaders' statement" issued at the Pittsburgh summit, held on 24 and 25 September 2009.

recovery. The rest of the world economy, particularly developing countries, will continue to experience growth deceleration.⁸

III. Direct challenges to public administration

17. The present section describes a set of challenges posed to public administration in numerous countries as a result of the crisis, although the severity of those challenges evidently varies from country to country. Those challenges were identified on the basis of consultations with all Committee members carried out by the Secretariat, and attention is focused on the issues most frequently pointed out by them. Each challenge is briefly sketched and concrete-related questions are included for possible discussion by the members of the Committee at its ninth session. Although in practice many of the challenges are interrelated and a systemic approach is thus necessary if they are to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion, for purposes of clarity and simplicity, each particular challenge is presented separately.

18. During their deliberations, Committee members may well expand this limited set of issues by adding others that may have gained relevance, and they may also enrich the discussion by further addressing the interrelationships among the particular challenges summarized in the present section. Similarly, they may contribute to the international dialogue by providing concrete examples of how particular countries familiar to them have acted or are planning to face the challenges.

Leadership

19. The crisis is clearly a result of regulatory failure. Governments need to take steps to strengthen the prudential regulation of the financial sector, including with regard to both banks and non-bank financial institutions. This will put a huge demand on capacity in terms of human resources and information needs.

20. Putting a stop to the crisis and setting up conditions for recovery will require actions from Government authorities. Heads of Government and ministers will need to convey to the public:

- (a) Exact diagnoses of the crisis in their countries;
- (b) Complete explanations about the mix of public policies and interventions that will be applied and the expected outcomes;
- (c) Timely and trustworthy information on the deployment of policies and the evolution of key socio-economic and financial indicators presented in a way that promotes better-informed and more realistic expectations concerning the timespan and magnitude of the effects of the crisis;
- (d) Recommendations about types of actions that the private sector, organized civil society and households can undertake in order to cope with the crisis period, and explanations about how public policies are contributing to reducing the negative impact on them and on the most disadvantaged groups in society.

⁸ *World Economic Situation and Prospects: Update as of Mid-2009*, available at www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.

21. In taking such actions, heads of Government and ministers will face the challenge of effectively convincing the largest number of stakeholders that the crisis is being properly addressed and that the Government has it under control. This is fundamental if trust is to be maintained and support gained for public policies. The challenge is even greater when policies are seen as costly and unfair, even though they may be indispensable for recovery and the resumption of sustainable growth. Success (or failure) in this respect by public officials may help maintain or increase (or lessen) public performance approval rates among voters and the population at large. This fact, in turn, may influence public policy decision-making and, concomitantly, have an impact on the maintenance over time, and on the inherent effectiveness, of such policies.

22. Government leaders may also promote, through the dissemination of adequate information about policies adopted, the idea that the crisis may be not as deep and lasting as feared, with a view to reducing the economic and social costs of the recession. To this end, leaders are called on to provide information so as to encourage firms and households to behave rationally and not take unnecessarily drastic actions in terms of reducing expenditure, laying off workers, speculating on foreign exchange, and so forth that would, in turn, deepen and prolong the crisis.

23. Moreover, it is inevitable that individual households, firms and communities in different geographical areas will be affected, not in a uniform manner, but in various ways and to different degrees. In short, although most stakeholders will lose as a result of the crisis, some will lose relatively more than others. Political balances will therefore be affected and diverse actors will tend to mobilize in different ways to influence public policy responses in the direction that best serves their particular individual or group interests. Public policy in general tends to be more open to question under these conditions, and Government leaders face the delicate and imperative task of selecting, negotiating and applying policies that seem to be more than adequate.

24. It is difficult for public sector leaders in these circumstances to serve the general public good with a long-term vision. Partisan, class or group interests or ideological visions may dominate public policymaking and delivery. The stakes range from radical positions advocating a total change in the economic strategy or development model of the country and a move towards different — albeit not well-determined — alternative policies (for instance, major, simultaneous changes in trade policy, public sector roles, social policy, etc.), to intermediate positions seeking better government interventions (enhanced regulation, early alert systems, more transparency, etc.) and essentially passive positions that anticipate a rapid recovery as a result of external factors (a new economic order, enhanced international development aid, recovery of economic demand from growth to come in the more advanced economies, etc.).

25. In this respect, Committee members may wish to discuss:

- The type of public and private sector leadership that is most appropriate in these conditions
- How the role of public administration can be redefined so as to enable the public sector to foresee and prevent crises
- How such leadership capacity can be enhanced under the circumstances of the crisis

- How public administration institutions can help individuals in leadership positions to best exert their roles in this context

Enhanced public governance for speedy and coordinated policy responses

26. In order to overcome the crisis, a combination of public policies is called for in all countries, with variations depending on national features and circumstances. Typically, a public policy package to deal with the crisis would consist of:

(a) Fiscal measures, such as stimulus packages — increasing public expenditure or lowering taxes — aimed at firms and households with a view to mitigating the impact of immediate low demand for goods and services and reducing macroeconomic contraction;

(b) Monetary and exchange-rate policies aimed at lowering domestic, as well as international, interest rates, while striving to attain a currency exchange rate that makes the prices of internationally tradable goods in the country more competitive;

(c) Social protection measures and safety nets to address the vulnerability of the population, in particular the poor. These could include measures to help those who become unemployed (such as unemployment insurance, information on job offerings and support for retraining); public programmes to provide essential goods and services for vulnerable people; and schemes to encourage students to stay in school and to prevent the deterioration of maternal and child health.

27. To prevent crises in their own countries and to protect their economies from crises elsewhere, Governments need to strengthen regulatory measures for the financial sector, banks and non-banks, as well as for capital flows.

28. Because of the complexity of the crisis and the variety of public policies needed to address it, policy coherence will be very important. Stimulus packages and regulatory measures for the financial sector emerge from the communities associated with ministries of finance. Policies for maintaining employment and enhancing working conditions along lines of decent work, together with policies for poverty alleviation and social protection, come from authorities and communities in the labour and social development fields. Support for strategic industries and to small and medium-sized enterprises results from policymaking in the ministries of the economy and trade, and so on. Those different sectors of public administration tend to have different agendas and policy approaches. Thus, policy coherence must be secured by public leaders through effective communication, oversight and consensus-building among a large variety of public, private and social stakeholders.

29. Moreover, if those diverse public policies and particular interventions are to be more effective and efficient, horizontal coordination among ministries and other public sector entities will be necessary. For instance, if programmes are delivered to the population separately by each sector of the administration, it will be less easy for people to obtain the full intended benefit than if more integrated approaches were taken. In addition, vertical coordination will be necessary in many cases, depending on the degree of decentralization in the country. Indeed, national Governments usually have better access to means of public finance, while local governments normally have better information about which particular allocation of public funds would have the most beneficial impact on the local economy and population. Thus, collaboration across levels of government can combine the best

from each to serve the public. Such an approach, however, presents a number of challenges, as set out below:

(a) Accountability may be jeopardized, as the efficacy of the aggregate allocation of public resources is largely affected by the efficiency and degree of honesty with which very large numbers of local governments utilize public resources. Institutional supervisory capacities may be insufficient under extraordinary circumstances, such as those posed by the crisis and the recovery policy packages;

(b) The alignment of priorities and effective rules may be affected, given that coordination is not a mechanical activity but is influenced by numerous factors, including information-sharing, communication and well-established priorities. However, competing political agendas and partisan boundaries sometimes impede effective vertical coordination and collaboration;

(c) As public administration at both the national and local levels may lack the capacity to not only deal with a large number of issues but also allocate and spend extraordinary amounts of public resources, delays of an administrative nature may occur, reducing the effectiveness of aggregate public sector demand in stimulating recovery.

30. Effective governance capacity within the overall public sector in each country is therefore crucial if its own policy mix is to be adequately delivered and the crisis is to be overcome with as minimal an impact and in as short a period as possible.

31. Moreover, international policy coordination is very much required for both regulatory purposes and to ensure the effectiveness of recovery packages. Enhanced global public governance and international policy coordination are thus called for, and Governments in all countries face the challenge of participating in the design of new international rules and institutions. International dialogue within the United Nations (for instance in the context of the meeting of the General Assembly to address the crisis⁹) and the summits of the G-20 held in 2008 and 2009, as well as those scheduled for 2010 and 2011, are of crucial importance for coordinated international policymaking and delivery.

32. In this respect, Committee members may wish to discuss questions such as the following:

- What types of public policies are most appropriate in facing the challenges brought about by the crisis?
- Which adjustments in public sector income and expenditure should be considered, not only for the immediate term, but to better promote development in the medium and long terms?
- What are the constraints on public administration in designing and implementing the required policy measures, and how should they be addressed?

⁹ See the report of the Commission of Experts of the President of the United Nations General Assembly on reforms of the international monetary and financial system, available at www.un.org/ga/president/63/interactive/financialcrisis/PreliminaryReport210509.pdf and *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2010: Global Outlook, pre-release*, available at www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.

- Given the capacity constraints, how can public administration prioritize the tasks?

Transparency

33. It is imperative to provide information to the public on the precise ways in which the mix of policies to overcome the crisis should be delivered and on how public budgets to stimulate recovery should be allocated, not only for reasons of credibility, but also to maintain public support for the policy package and to preserve the reputation of public authorities.

34. In particular, as the crisis has led to significant decreases in income levels for the majority, there is widespread concern in most countries regarding the fair and efficient use of public funds through stimulus packages or other comparable measures (i.e., public interventions to rescue troubled financial intermediaries or strategic industries facing major financial imbalances). Fairness is demanded by the public; the benefits must accrue not solely or mostly to firms, individuals or groups with a special connection to government, but to all, and, in particular, to the most needy. A lack of transparency in that respect might (a) undermine trust and political support for individual public authorities and Government and State institutions in general, thus endangering the efficacy of public interventions and risking political instability; (b) provoke significant redistributions of wealth in ways that not only are unfair and, in some cases, possibly illegal, but also favour rent-seeking behaviour, act against fair competition and provide the wrong incentives for efficiency, innovation and competitiveness in general; and (c) prolong outdated practices and political institutions, including co-optation, corruption and the capture of public policies by specific industries or groups, delaying the modernization of State institutions and impeding overall economic, social and political development over the longer term.

35. In this regard, members of Committee may consider discussing questions such as the following:

- What is the best way to reform public sector charters and codes of conduct in both developed and developing countries?
- How can e-government be effectively adopted to improve governmental performance and increase the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of public administration?
- How can information and communications technology tools be utilized by Governments to increase the transparency and efficiency of government spending, in particular with reference to stimulus packages in the context of the present crisis, at the central and local levels?

Public service delivery

36. As the crisis has reduced the revenues and operational budgets of public utilities and entities, all countries are preoccupied with the supply of public services. It is necessary not only to prevent a decrease in the supply of such services, but also to ensure that its growth keeps pace with demographic and economic trends. There is also a concern that, in some cases, public services may become less affordable, particularly for the disadvantaged population, if respective prices or tariffs are increased to generate additional public revenues. Delinquencies

by consumers of public services could also become more frequent as income falls as a result of the recession and because prices and tariffs may be increased.

37. All of these factors threaten to cause setbacks in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with regard to effective access to training services, support for entrepreneurs and small or medium-sized enterprises, education and health services and public services aimed at sustainable development.

38. It is therefore of the utmost importance that adequate strategies to meet these challenges be adopted. Such strategies could include, *inter alia*, increases in efficiency and cost reductions in the public sector; the enhanced targeting of subsidies for the poor involving the adoption of adequate programmes that, notwithstanding unavoidable difficulties, would serve to focus the supply of certain public services on the most needy; and ways in which citizens can be engaged to make their access to services more efficient.

39. E-government approaches could be of enormous benefit for the implementation of such strategies. In particular, the Internet and mobile technologies can support public service delivery, especially in remote or sparsely populated areas, in both developed and developing countries.¹⁰ To this end, the supply of information and communications technology infrastructure, connectivity and online services must be fostered, requiring enhanced regulation to attract private investment and promote effective public-private partnerships. Demand, too, needs to be encouraged, by information and communications technology service cost and tariff reductions through increased competition and enhanced regulation. However, if such potential is to be of benefit, it will be necessary to develop content, increase the skills of public sector officials and raise the e-literacy of the population.

40. In that connection Committee members may find it appropriate to deliberate on the following questions:

- How can public administration secure the provision and expansion of public services under the conditions presented by the crisis, and how can citizens be engaged to that end?
- How can multilevel governance and decentralization contribute to better public service delivery at the local level?
- How realistic is it in the current climate to increase the delivery of public services through information and communications technology in countries with diverse development levels? What are the key interventions for progress in that respect?

Social and financial protection for vulnerable groups

41. Not all groups in society are equally affected by the crisis. In addition to the varying impact of the crisis in terms of income, there are significant disparities in most countries with regard to vulnerability, with different groups being exposed to different risks. For example, the risk of unemployment differs for different groups of workers (in terms of gender, skills, education levels, age, nationality, ethnicity, etc.); the risks of falling into poverty and malnutrition, dropping out of school or

¹⁰ United Nations, *E-Government Survey 2010: Leveraging e-Government at a Time of Financial and Economic Crisis* (to be issued).

losing access to health-care services differ for children from different types of households (mono-parental, extended, etc.); and the risk of suffering as a result of the shutdown of certain public services varies for inhabitants of urban or rural localities, and so forth.

42. Thus, the fundamental, real deprivation of diverse goods and services in which large disadvantaged groups live in many countries is compounded by greater uncertainty about future living conditions and development possibilities. Therefore, in order to preserve equity, public administrations will have to be innovative in devising schemes for social protection, including universal social protection. Some will opt for a piecemeal approach to provide protection against unemployment, ill health, natural disasters and other risks, with separate instruments and financing mechanisms being put in place, often targeting different groups. However, there is growing awareness among policymakers about the advantages of system-wide reforms which can secure universal, coherent and integral social protection. Opting for enhanced tax systems, as opposed to clientele-based fee arrangements, also offers promising prospects for the efficient financing of integrated and equitable systems. In addition, public administrations may find it convenient to further adopt information and communications technology applications and engage citizens in the design and implementation of such protection mechanisms so as to expand the scope of viable and efficient solutions.

43. In this regard, members of the Committee may wish to discuss the following questions:

- What is required for the implementation of citizen-centred policies and innovative approaches for social protection?
- How can social protection systems be enhanced to protect the nutritional, health and educational standards of low-income groups?
- How is social protection affected by insufficient public sector governance, and how can intergovernmental coordination contribute?
- Would focalization or universal approaches be better for countries looking to advance social protection? What considerations should be made in this respect regarding not only equity and efficiency in terms of policy, but also the efficacy of public administration in terms of delivering social protection?

Regulation of the financial sector

44. We must not overlook the fact that, at the very root of the present crisis were serious deficiencies in regulation and in the regulatory institutions of certain types of financial intermediaries, in particular in some advanced market economies. While it would be possible to overcome the present crisis even without changes in this respect, it is necessary, as well as a moral and political imperative, that Governments enhance those regulations and institutions in order to avoid similar crises in future.

45. As financial markets and institutions are elements central to globalization, international cooperation is very much needed to that end. The international dialogue fostered by the United Nations and the G-20 is of great importance in enlightening countries as to how to improve financial regulation and to generate enhanced mandates for financial regulators and international financial institutions.

46. In many countries, enhancing regulatory institutions may imply additional challenges in connection with capacity-building, specifically to upgrade the qualifications of public officials and institutions in charge of financial regulations and international negotiations.

47. Members of the Committee may wish to discuss, in this regard, the following questions:

- What are the capacity-building challenges in developing countries to the introduction of stricter financial sector regulations, and how can international cooperation help in this regard?
- What lessons have been learned from the regulatory failure that provoked the crisis?
- How can the risk of future crises be prevented through enhanced monitoring and an early warning system?
- How can the public interest be better served through reforming regulation, and how can regulatory capture be avoided? Which forms of citizens' participation and transparency measures need to be considered in this respect?

IV. Opportunities for public administration in the wake of the crisis

48. When given adequate attention, a crisis can be a powerful and effective incentive for positive change. Public administration should turn every challenge posed by the crisis into an opportunity for welfare-enhancing reform. The present section addresses some of those opportunities and issues.

Opportunity to build better and more effective public administration

49. Current political conditions may be more favourable for the carrying out of reforms to public administration that typically face opposition from advocates of pure private-sector management approaches. The current crisis provides an opportunity for public administration to reassess and reassert itself as the guarantor of law and order in all sectors (including the economic and financial sectors), stability, peace and security and a decent standard of living for the majority of people through adequate social protection and equitable public service delivery.

Opportunity to enhance attractiveness of public service and effectiveness of public administration

50. Will the economic crisis highlight the importance of public administration and make it attractive as a profession? Will the best talent be attracted to work in the public service? This is an opportunity for university faculties, management development institutes and public sector human resources agencies, such as ministries responsible for public administration and public service commissions, to review recruitment processes and to highlight the usefulness of public service to the people. If public administration is to become a more effective agent for development, the best people must be attracted to public service.

Opportunity to focus on current and, in particular, future needs

51. Emphasis must now be placed on building the capacity of public administration to foresee and prevent, or at least to manage, economic, financial and other crises. Emphasis must also be placed on preparing public servants who are capable of managing tomorrow today. In addition, public administration capacities must be strengthened through enhanced data-gathering and statistical systems, in many cases linked to monitoring systems. The capacity of public servants must also be enhanced so that they can adequately assess early warnings about possible crises, make a decision and act upon them in a timely manner. The needs that must be addressed by public administration must be assessed not only in terms of today, but also, and in particular, in terms of many years hence with a view to preparing for any crisis.

Opportunity for creating new public administration institutions and new ways of working

52. One impact that the crisis is having on public administration relates to the creation of new institutions. The United States, for example, created the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board.¹¹ The new institution did not directly embark on its work using traditional, bureaucratic public administration means. Rather, it built a broader, problem-solving community on the basis of the concept that "none of us is as smart as all of us", and it engaged in a week-long online recovery dialogue on information and communications technology solutions to allow government to hear from a much larger and more diverse group of vendors, customers and thought leaders in the information and communications technology community.¹² The present federal Administration in the United States is proceeding on the basis of the view, as expressed by President Barack Obama in his speech accepting his nomination by the Democratic Party as its presidential candidate, that twenty-first-century challenges cannot be met with a twentieth-century bureaucracy.

53. Committee members may be interested to address the following questions:

- Given that public administration needs to be modernized continuously, how can the context of the present crisis serve to accelerate change?
- In which areas are innovations in public administration most needed?
- What are the most attractive opportunities presented by the crisis to this end?

Enhanced procurement systems

54. In order to reduce public sector investment and operational costs, thereby freeing public resources for other uses entailing larger social and economic benefits for the population, Governments often need to acquire inputs at more competitive and lower prices, outsource partially or totally the production of specific public services or engage in some sort of public-private partnerships for infrastructure and

¹¹ Initiated by President Barack Obama upon assuming office, on the basis of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The Board comprises a Chairman and 10 Inspectors General and is charged with overseeing all funds disbursed under the Act with a view to ensuring that the funds are used in a manner consistent with the goals of economic recovery and job creation, while providing the public with a transparent view of how that process is unfolding.

¹² See www.napawash.org/recoverydialogue/overview.pdf.

public service provision. However, in some cases, corruption among officials within public administration, or regulatory capture by industries or firms that benefit from outdated procurement or public contracting rules create obstacles to reform.

55. While large parts of the population are usually not much concerned about such matters, the strict limitations in public budgets resulting from the crisis do present more favourable conditions for Governments to engage citizens in support of regulatory reforms in the area of public sector procurement.

56. Committee members may wish to discuss questions such as the following:

- How have Governments in different countries proceeded to modernize their public sector procurement regulations?
- What are the best practices in the area of citizen involvement with reference to monitoring public sector procurement?
- How can information and communications technology tools be utilized by Governments to increase the transparency and efficiency of government procurement?

More efficient public administration systems, in particular fiscal management regimes

57. It is also the case that countries sometimes face constraints in exchanging existing internal structures and procedures for new, more efficient ones. For instance, opposition from certain sectors of the bureaucracy resists supporting training for the acquisition of new skills to allow for the more effective use of management technologies, fearing that cuts in public employment will result from such administrative modernization.

58. Under the conditions created by the crisis, Governments can gain support from wider groups of the population to go ahead in modernizing specific areas of public administration so as to:

- (a) Reduce the supply costs of public services and make them more affordable for citizens;
- (b) Restructure inefficient State-owned enterprises and introduce new technologies so as to increase the productivity of the public sector and favour green growth;
- (c) Enhance public sector governance, in particular with a view to attaining a more integrated and coordinated public sector.

59. Concrete measures to that end are varied. Some actions, however, seem to offer considerable opportunities for a large number of countries. In this respect, one outstanding possibility is that of enhancing e-government systems. The introduction of information and communications technology can allow for the more direct involvement of citizens in enhancing policy design, monitoring and implementation, including through social media tools. This can be of benefit to very large groups of the population and the private sector in the following ways:

- (a) By speeding up administrative procedures so as to decrease waiting times for individuals or firms in obtaining certain public sector services, thus reducing real and opportunity costs for them;

(b) By expanding coverage of certain government or public sector services, facilitating access to citizens in relatively remote or sparsely populated areas and making such services more affordable by reducing users' transportation costs and other related costs;

(c) By increasing the quality of public sector performance through, inter alia, reducing some types of human error, facilitating storage and retrieval of information and increasing transparency so as to reduce corruption.

60. The e-government survey conducted periodically by the Secretariat shows that e-government tools have been used in an unprecedented manner as a means of supporting policies to alleviate and cope with the crisis: providing transparent crisis-response measures, conveying relevant information and support to citizens and businesses and encouraging feedback from citizens on alternatives for addressing the economic downturn. Overall, e-government is designed for speed and for managing complexity, qualities that make it well suited to financial monitoring and regulation. Moreover, there is growing evidence that the provision of transparency, and the use of e-government tools to support it, constitute a policy whose initial required investments are quickly and largely offset by increased savings and enhanced public trust.¹⁶

61. In this regard, members of the Committee could consider discussing the following questions:

- What support can be provided by the Secretariat to enhance e-government readiness, in particular in the developing countries?
- How can independent oversight bodies enhance the efficiency of public management?
- How can Governments better monitor financial global transactions in order to prevent future crisis?

Redirecting public expenditure and investment towards long-term development priorities

62. As a result of the current crisis, most countries have increased public expenditure and investments to strengthen aggregate demand, limit the depth of the recession and ensure a faster recovery. Some economic analysts refer to this approach as the return of Keynesian or demand-side macroeconomic policies, in contrast to supply-side economic policies. However, the use of such terminology gives the false impression that there exists a fundamental dichotomy between those two approaches, while, in fact, they can be compatible, as demonstrated by the experience and practice of fiscal policies in several countries.

63. Indeed, several countries have selected, as part of the economic stimulus packages, public investment programmes to increase human, physical or environmental capital. While injecting additional income into their economies in the short and medium terms, they are simultaneously building better foundations for more competitive, sustainable inclusive and equitable growth in the long term. Investment programmes of this sort are aimed at, inter alia:

(a) Building more or better infrastructure for energy generation in ways that result in lower carbon emissions and contribute to mitigating global climate change and achieving more sustainable development;

(b) Constructing infrastructure to serve the marginalized or poor in rural or urban areas in sectors such as water and sanitation and housing, reducing the deprivation of such groups and alleviating to some extent their poor living conditions;

(c) Expanding education and health services, as well as employment training, thus assisting poor and vulnerable groups with their current needs, while at the same time increasing their human capital and creating conditions more favourable for inclusive and equitable development;

(d) Providing funding for technological research and development, or for technical and administrative modernization, particularly of small and medium-sized enterprises, enhancing their competitiveness and thus strengthening that large portion of the productive base of the economy, which generates the largest proportion of jobs, including a large proportion of female employment.

64. It should be noted that such smart spending by public administrations not only helps economic recovery and reduces the social costs of the crisis, but also contributes at the global level to the achievement of key internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

65. The context created by the crisis may offer new opportunities for advancing towards an improved architecture for the international development finance system and for enhancing partnerships in accordance with the Monterrey Consensus. It may also be possible in these circumstances to accelerate the modernization of international aid institutions, within both donor and recipient countries, to cope with the complementary demands of reaching the internationally agreed aid targets and increasing equity in aid allocations, on the one hand, and increasing transparency, accountability and productivity in the area of aid-funded programmes, on the other.

66. In that connection, members of the Committee may wish to deliberate on the following questions:

- What are good examples of stimulus packages that can help in advancing towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals?
- How can gender analysis enhance government spending?
- How can public expenditure be maintained after the stimulus packages have been phased out with a view to moving more quickly towards sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth?
- Why were such expenditures not prioritized to a comparable extent in the past, before stimulus packages were required?

Restructuring or rescheduling of public debt and priority of maintaining employment levels, particularly in poor countries

67. Debt service is a heavy burden for numerous countries. Payments of principal and interest can absorb considerable proportions of public-sector revenue and expenditure, thus limiting to a remarkable degree the public expenditure that is needed as part of the stimulus packages. Several proposals have therefore been made in international forums aimed at establishing a temporary debt moratorium for the least developed countries. Concomitantly, a global pact to maintain employment

and increase decent work has been made within the International Labour Organization.¹³ Such endeavours complement other international efforts, specially by the G-20, to resist national pressures to adopt protectionist international trade regimes (seen in some countries as convenient for preserving national employment rates), which would further damage international trade flows, with the counterproductive consequence that global demand would fall even more, harming employment worldwide.

68. In this regard, Committee members may wish to discuss the following questions:

- Have the international efforts been effective enough?
- What is needed in order to ensure that Governments of various countries can exercise stronger leadership domestically so as to defend employment levels and favour decent work?
- What are the respective weights that debt rescheduling and public sector reform should be given on the agendas of various countries aimed at economic recovery and long-term growth?

V. Final considerations

69. Even though there are several indicators which signal, albeit with considerable uncertainty, that the worst phase of the crisis may be close to an end in some of the advanced economies and that recovery will resume gradually, it must be noted that such trends are incipient and limited to a small number of countries. Developing countries will continue to experience the effects of the crisis for a longer period. This is expected for several reasons, including the magnitude of the economic decline registered in the world economy, the gradual phasing-out of stimulus packages in the larger economies and a slow recovery in the major economies (because of idle productive capacity and still-weak expectations).¹³ Therefore, it is pertinent for public administrations in all countries to further explore ways to achieve adaptation and transformation, seeking to become more effective factors for recovery and for long-term development.

70. The rapid spread of the crisis has demonstrated that the interconnection of national economies around the world has reached a very high level, strengthening the trend towards globalization. The international dialogue must therefore continue, aimed at better policy coordination to facilitate the recovery, enhanced systems for the early detection of possible future crises and assistance to countries, mostly in the developing world, to improve public financial regulation, at the same time as international financial institutions carry out much-needed reforms.

71. In this context, the Committee can continue to provide the Economic and Social Council and the global policy dialogue with relevant inputs in the years to come on matters similar to those presented in the present note.

¹³ Stiglitz, Joseph (2009), "The current economic crisis and lessons for economic theory", *Eastern Economic Journal*, No. 35, and "The imperative of improved global economic coordination", *Development Outreach*, World Bank Institute, December 2009; *World Economic Situation and Prospects: Update as of Mid-2009*, available at www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp, and Lin, Justin Yifu, "Policy responses to the global economic crisis", *Development Outreach*, World Bank Institute, December 2009.

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Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note highlights the major activities undertaken by the Secretariat in 2009 under the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance for review by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration. It also sets out the scope of activities planned for implementation in the biennium 2010-2011 and the proposed strategic framework for the period 2012-2013. The Committee is invited to review and provide feedback to the Secretariat on these activities, which are intended to assist Governments at the national and local levels in meeting their current governance and public administration challenges and in addressing emerging issues in a globalized world.

* E/C.16/2010/1.



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I. Introduction

1. The Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat is the principal entity within the Secretariat mandated to implement the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. Its mission is to assist Governments in strengthening their governance and public administration capacities and information and communication technology systems in order to achieve national development objectives in the context of the internationally agreed development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals.
2. The present note highlights the major activities undertaken by the Secretariat in 2009 under the Programme for review by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration.
3. The note also highlights the achievements and challenges faced as the Division aimed to streamline the operations of the Programme and strengthen its capacities in addressing the needs of Governments at the national and local levels in their pursuit of efficient and effective public administration capacities and systems to achieve national development objectives. The impact of the reform exercise was reflected in the constructive shift in work practices, from process-orientated to results-orientated and from supply-orientated to demand-orientated. The Secretariat also instituted processes to take advantage of information communications technology in order to improve the quality of its work and the efficiency and effectiveness of the process, and to enhance its knowledge management for information-sharing and learning.
4. The note also sets out the main activities to be implemented under the Programme during the current biennium 2010-2011. The Committee is requested to provide feedback to the Secretariat on these activities, which are intended to assist Governments in meeting their current governance and public administration challenges in a globalized world, and on emerging issues including the economic and financial crisis.
5. The note also expounds the proposed strategic framework for the period 2012-2013 for review by the Committee. In the preparation of this framework for the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, the Secretariat took into consideration its strengths and accomplishments noted, as well as recommendations contained in its reform exercise and in recent evaluation reports on the Programme and its various components.

II. Major activities in 2009

6. The activities of the United Nations Secretariat in the area of public administration and finance are implemented, under subprogramme 8, Public administration and development management, of section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the programme budget, by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, with the aim of assisting Governments in advancing public sector reform and improving the quality of public service delivery, particularly to those who have requested assistance, and to developing countries, especially the least developed, post-conflict or crisis countries, and countries with economies in transition. A summary of the major activities implemented in 2009 is provided below.

A. Servicing of intergovernmental bodies

General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council

7. The mandates of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, are defined by resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Through servicing of these intergovernmental bodies, the Division aims to promote enriched dialogue, awareness, policy options and common approaches for the betterment of public service, particularly in the cross-cutting issues of public sector reform, participatory governance, e-government development, information and communications technology for development, capacity-building and the promotion of professionalism and ethics in the public sector.

8. The positive impact of the servicing of intergovernmental bodies is reflected in the resolutions adopted in 2008 and 2009, which contain at least eight references or recommendations pertaining to intergovernmental bodies, including General Assembly resolutions 63/202 and 64/187, entitled "Information and communication technologies for development", and resolution 64/186, entitled "Building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway"; Economic and Social Council resolutions 2008/32 and 2009/18, adopted in connection with the reports of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventh and eighth sessions (E/2008/44 and E/2009/44), and Council resolution 2009/7 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. It is also reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet (E/2009/92).

9. The Division has become the focal point within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for coordinating ICT for development including e-government, e-parliament, ICT for the Millennium Development Goals and Internet-governance-related issues.

10. One of the lessons learned through the intergovernmental deliberations was that the centrality and foundation of governance and public administration, in relation to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly through ICT, should be further recognized at the global and national levels.

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

11. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/45, the Council approved, in its decision 2009/201 C, the nomination by the Secretary-General of 24 experts to serve on the Committee in their personal capacity for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 2010 and expiring on 31 December 2013.

12. The Division provided substantive and administrative service to the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its eighth session (see <http://www.unpan.org/cepa.asp>), which was held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 March to 3 April 2009. During the session, the Committee dealt with the following substantive items: (a) the human factor in capacity-building and development; (b) the compendium of basic United Nations terminology in governance and public administration; (c) the review of the activities of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, Finance and Development; and (d) the public administration perspective on implementing the internationally agreed

goals and commitments in regard to global public health. Based on its discussion of the aforementioned topics, the Committee recommended to the Council a draft resolution for its consideration and adoption.

13. In July 2009, the Economic and Social Council reviewed the report of the Committee on its eighth session and adopted the draft resolution contained in the report (see E/2009/44, chap. I), as amended. The draft resolution was subsequently adopted by the Council as resolution 2009/18, entitled "Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its eighth session". The ninth and tenth sessions of the Committee are scheduled to be held in 2010 and 2011.

B. Analytical research

14. Through a 12-month internal review of its work in the context of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, and based on its mandate, demand and capacity, the Division redefined its thematic focus as: (a) institutional and human resources capacity development; (b) electronic/mobile government development; and (c) citizen engagement and ICT for development management. Through analytical research, knowledge-sharing, advisory assistance, training and online services in the aforementioned areas, the Division champions efficient, effective and citizen-oriented public services based on the principles of transparency, accountability and citizen engagement. It stresses innovative approaches to public management particularly through information and communications technology.

15. Since early 2009, the Division has consolidated its resources for producing quality products and the delivery of client-centric services through strengthening research and analytical work, while continuing to perform its other core functions, such as advisory services at the country level. The organizational structure of the Division was adjusted to allow the institutional framework to effectively deliver its mandate and allocate its resources to address work areas in consideration of the integration of cross-cutting issues and staff cohesiveness.

16. The flagship publication of the Division is the *United Nations e-Government Survey*,¹ which assesses 192 countries according to their e-government development and the extent of e-participation worldwide. The reports of the surveys for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2008 provide time-series data and an analysis of trends in e-government readiness and development across regions and at the country level, and have become the benchmark for measuring e-government development.

17. The 2010 *United Nations e-Government Survey: Leveraging e-Government at a Time of Financial and Economic Crisis*² was completed in December 2009 and launched in early 2010. The report presents various roles for e-government in addressing the ongoing world financial and economic crisis. It postulates that the public trust that is gained through transparency can be further enhanced through the free sharing of Government data based on open standards. The ability of e-government to handle speed and complexity can also underpin regulatory reform. While technology is no substitute for good policy, it may give citizens the power to question the actions of regulators and bring systemic issues to the fore. Similarly,

¹ See <http://www.unpan.org/e-government>.

² See <http://www.unpan.org/Library/MajorPublications/UNEGovernmentSurvey/tabid/646/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

e-government can add agility to public service delivery to help Governments to respond to an expanded set of demands even as revenues fall short. Since the previous edition of the survey, in 2008, Governments have made great strides in developing online services, especially in middle-income countries. The costs associated with telecommunication infrastructure and human capital continue to impede e-government development. However, effective strategies and legal frameworks can compensate significantly, even in least developed countries. Those who are able to harness the potential of expanded broadband access in developed regions and mobile cellular networks in developing countries to advance the United Nations development agenda have much to gain going forward.

18. The *World Public Sector Report*³ is produced biennially by the Division as a research and analytical tool to provide policymakers and civil society with relevant research findings and information on issues related to the public sector. In its resolution 59/55, the General Assembly recognized the significant analytical and operational contributions of the *Report* to public administration. Previous editions include *World Public Sector Report 2001: Globalization and the State*;⁴ *World Public Sector Report 2003: E-Government at the Crossroads*;⁵ *World Public Sector Report 2005: Unlocking the Human Potential for Public Sector Performance*;⁶ and *World Public Sector Report 2008*, entitled *People Matter: Civic Engagement in Public Governance*.⁷

19. The *World Public Sector Report 2010* was completed in 2009 and is scheduled for publication in the first quarter of 2010. The report will analyse the challenges, strategies and practices in rebuilding public administration after conflict. It will provide key lessons learned about transforming Governments to promote peaceful coexistence, sustainable development and prosperity for all citizens. The *Report* will be based on a literature review of the main theories and issues involved in post-conflict reconstruction and an analysis of relevant case studies and good practices from all five regions of the world, covering the period from the end of the Second World War to the present. The publication will examine four main key areas of public administration reconstruction: institution-building, leadership, human resources in the public sector, citizen engagement and public service delivery. The *Report* is intended for decision makers in conflict or conflict-prone situations; regional and international organizations; practitioners and experts involved in reconstructing governance and public administration, particularly in post-conflict situations and transition economies; educators, scholars and students at academic institutions, think-tanks and policy centres; and interested laypersons.

20. In response to the recent intergovernmental deliberations (including General Assembly resolutions 63/202, 64/186 and 64/187) calling for Governments to recognize the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in that regard encourage the United Nations development system to continue its effort to promote the use of ICT as a critical enabler of development and as a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Division initiated research and

³ See <http://www.unpan.org/Library/MajorPublications/WorldPublicSectorReport/tabid/645/Default.aspx>.

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.II.H.2.

⁵ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.H.3.

⁶ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.H.5.

⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.II.H.11.

analytical development of a knowledge base on public administration and governance, with a special focus on the application of ICT in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. With the advance of ICT tools, the Division envisions the development of a comprehensive, up-to-date and readily accessible knowledge base, with Member States as its direct target users. The more focused and comprehensive knowledge base will have three thematic areas identical to the Division's work areas, which are: (a) electronic/mobile government development; (b) institutional and human resources capacity development; (c) citizen engagement and ICT for development management and the Millennium Development Goals. In 2009, the Division further developed the United Nations Global Knowledge Repository for Electronic/Mobile Government, as the first step in establishing the aforementioned knowledge base in the thematic area of electronic/mobile government development. The repository represents a progressive effort through gathering cross-national and local information on the capacities and challenges of Governments in electronic/mobile government development, national e-solutions, research and knowledge transfer activities and projects.

21. The following three compendiums were completed in 2009: (a) the *Compendium of Innovative E-Government Practices, Volume III*;⁸ (b) the *Compendium of ICT Applications on Electronic Government, Volume 2: Mobile Applications on Human Security and Business Development*;⁹ and (c) *Good Practices and Innovations in Public Governance: United Nations Public Service Awards Winners and Finalists, 2003-2009*.¹⁰ Other databases aimed at promoting knowledge-sharing include the *United Nations E-Government Knowledge Base*;¹¹ the *United Nations Public Administration Profiles*¹² and the *Glossary of Basic United Nations Terminology in Governance and Public Administration*.¹³

22. In 2009, the Division prepared three reports on expert group meetings, which were held to expound on new developments or emerging trends in governance and public administration that were of interest to the public sector. The expert group meetings provided forums where expert knowledge and experience could be mobilized to identify critical issues and begin forging consensus on policy options. The three reports on expert group meetings were as follows:

(a) *Report of the Expert Group Meeting: E-Government and Public Private Partnerships for Better Public Service Delivery and MDGs Implementation*;¹⁴

(b) *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Climate Change Governance: Citizens for a Sustainable Future*;¹⁵

(c) *Innovation in Governance and Public Administration to Achieve the United Nations Development Goals*.¹⁶

⁸ See <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan037362.pdf>.

⁹ See <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan037478.pdf>.

¹⁰ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.II.H.1.

¹¹ See <http://www2.unpan.org/egovkb/>.

¹² See http://www.unpan.org/country_profiles.

¹³ See <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un-dpadm/unpan034224.pdf>.

¹⁴ <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan037331.pdf>.

¹⁵ <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan037198.pdf>.

¹⁶ <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan037380.pdf>.

C. Knowledge-sharing and training

23. The United Nations Public Administration Network (see <http://www.unpan.org>) is an online network of 38 relevant international and regional institutions and United Nations-related agencies. In 2009, the Network continued to serve as the de facto global network and portal for public administration and governance. In an effort to continuously enhance the capacity of the Network to serve its users, several improvements were made to the platform, including the introduction of web feeds ("Really simple syndication") to publish frequently updated content, the redesign of global and regional home pages, the introduction of social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, PA Connect, and introduction of the Network help desk system. The Network also witnessed a dramatic increase in content contribution from its partners in 2009, with a total contribution of 4,278 documents, 2,528 news articles, 776 resources items, 218 events, 218 contacts and 131 announcements.

24. The UNPAN Online Training Centre¹⁷ is a learning content management system, delivering online capacity-building courses on various topics in public administration. During 2009, 24 online courses were delivered to 2,335 participants from around the world, compared to 1,525 participants in the previous year. With the help of its partners, the Network is developing more courses on decentralized governance, knowledge management, e-government development, citizen engagement, and human resources and institutional development in the public sector.

25. A unique online and interactive tool, METER2, was implemented and launched in May 2009. The Division and the Centre for Technology in Government, State University of New York at Albany, collaborated in the refinement of the second version of the product, METER2, with Microsoft Corporation acting as technical adviser to the project. METER2 aims to assist Governments, especially from developing and the least developed countries, and decision makers at any level throughout the world in developing, monitoring, refining and improving the context within which information and communication technologies are used to transform Government, in a sense creating the context for e-Government. METER2 enables Governments to identify their perceived strengths, and the areas that need to be further developed within their national e-government enabling environment, thus assisting Governments in concentrating use of their respective available resources towards bridging existing gaps and providing better services. METER2 can be used by academia, non-governmental organizations, and government bodies at the national, regional and local levels to help shape the national e-government enabling environment, its structure and content.

D. Advocacy and partnership-building

26. A core focus of the Division is to facilitate dialogue, improve the accessibility of information and knowledge-sharing and promote partnership-building among international, regional and national institutions, including public, private, academic and non-profit organizations, through the United Nations Public Administration Network, and the United Nations Public Service Awards and United Nations Public Service Day. Inter-branch collaboration within the Division and inter-agency

¹⁷ See <http://www.unpan.org/onlinetraining>.

collaboration were particularly encouraged to deliver integrated and cohesive activities, services and products through teams and systematic planning and implementation mechanisms and by strengthening networks such as UNPAN and the Governance and Institution-building Cluster of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs.

United Nations Public Service Awards and United Nations Public Service Day

27. The United Nations Public Service Awards¹⁸ programme was first established by the Economic and Social Council in 2000 to promote better delivery of services by Governments. It is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. Through an annual competition, it rewards the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions with respect to promoting a more effective and responsive public administration in countries worldwide.

28. The 2009 United Nations Public Service Awards ceremony and United Nations Public Service Day were held on 23 and 24 June 2009 at United Nations Headquarters. Delegates from the permanent missions to the United Nations and innovative leaders whose institutions have won United Nations Public Service Awards in past years attended, together with the 2009 winners and finalists. For the first time in the history of the United Nations Public Service Awards programme, the Secretary-General made welcoming remarks and handed out the awards together with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. The ceremony also featured a vibrant cultural performance and received unprecedented media attention.

29. The 2009 United Nations Public Service Awards were given in four categories: (a) category 1: improving transparency, accountability and responsiveness in public service; (b) category 2: improving the delivery of services; (c) category 3: fostering participation in policymaking decisions through innovative mechanisms; and (d) category 4: advancing knowledge management in Government. In addition, a special award for United Nations Public Administration Network member excellence on knowledge-sharing was first established in 2009 to celebrate the achievements of network members in advancing knowledge-sharing through the use of ICT to advance the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development targets. Out of 168 nominations from 41 countries, 8 winners and 4 finalists were presented with the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service.

30. The 2010 United Nations Public Service Awards ceremony is scheduled to be held at Barcelona, Spain, on 23 June 2010. The government of Catalonia will be hosting the event and will assist the Division in co-organizing the event.

Governance and Institution-building Cluster of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs

31. The Division is the lead focal point of the Governance and Institution-building Cluster of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs. A review of the work programmes circulated by cluster members in 2009 identified no overlap or duplication and no programme inconsistencies. Institutional and regional differences necessitate and justify the existing degree of flexibility in the formulation of objectives, accomplishments and indicators of the respective work programmes.

¹⁸ See <http://www.unpan.org/unpsa>.

32. As part of the Secretariat effort to bring coherence and common approaches among United Nations entities engaged in normative, analytical and technical work in the economic and social field, particularly in the Governance and Institution-building Cluster, the Division initiated and implemented the following activities with other entities within the same cluster:

(a) Workshop on the theme "E-government development in Africa: progress made and challenges ahead" (17-19 February 2009), in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa;

(b) Leadership capacity-building workshop for local governance and service delivery in the Economic Commission for Africa (5 and 6 March 2009), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);

(c) Round table on governance and applications for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (9 and 10 December 2009), in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific;

(d) International meeting on economic and social councils, national development strategies, participatory democracy and ICT for development (17 and 18 December 2009), in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

33. There are positive indications for collaboration in 2010-2011 from a number of partners, as indicated in the activities below:

(a) Contribution of the Governance and Institution-building Cluster to the United Nations Public Administration Network to building knowledge in the area of governance and public administration issues at the global and regional levels, including collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA);

(b) Further building of the knowledge base on electronic/mobile government, in collaboration with the Bureau for Development Policy of UNDP;

(c) An ad hoc expert group meeting on public sector leadership capacity-building, in collaboration with the Bureau for Development Policy and ESCWA;

(d) An ad hoc expert group meeting on public sector human resources development, in collaboration with the Bureau for Development Policy and ESCWA;

(e) A capacity-building workshop on reforming institutions of the public sector for development, in collaboration with the Bureau for Development Policy and ESCWA;

(f) A capacity-building workshop on developing human resources management capacities in the public sector, in collaboration with the Bureau for Development Policy and ESCWA.

Implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society Action Lines C1, C7eGov and C11

34. The Division is the lead facilitator¹⁹ for action lines C1, C7eGov and C11 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.²⁰ In 2009, the Division concentrated its efforts on facilitating an exchange of views, information and experiences,

¹⁹ See <http://www.unpan.org/ws1s>.

²⁰ See A/60/687.

assisting countries in capacity-building, policy dialogue and advocacy programmes for utilizing information and communication technologies for development among Governments, stakeholders, civil society and the players involved in the implementation of the above-mentioned action lines.

35. An expert group meeting was held in conjunction with the fourth facilitation meeting of lines C1, C7eGovernment and C11 of the Geneva Plan of Action²¹ and the Tunis Agenda on 20 May 2009. The theme of the meeting, organized by the Division in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), was "E-government and public private partnerships for better public service delivery and Millennium Development Goals implementation". The event provided a platform to create synergies among different stakeholders for more effective knowledge-sharing and collaboration to ensure implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society and the Millennium Development Goals at the international, regional and national levels.

Global Alliance for ICT and Development

36. The Global Alliance for ICT and Development²² (GAID), supervised by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs through the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, plays a catalytic role within the United Nations in transforming the spirit and vision of the World Summit on the Information Society into action and promoting the use of information and communications technology for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

37. During the twelfth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in cooperation with the Commission on Science and Technology for Development secretariat, ITU and the World Health Organization brought two key perspectives to the Commission: (a) on innovation, convergence and mobile technologies, with panel discussions held in Geneva on 26 May 2009 on mobile technology, convergence and social networking tools for development and poverty alleviation; and (b) on digital health, with a panel discussion on delivering innovation in global public health.

38. During the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2009 of the Economic and Social Council, two events were organized: (a) a special ministerial breakfast round table on Africa and the least developed countries on the theme "Digital health and development in Africa: role of public and private partnerships", held on 7 July 2009; and (b) a special event on Africa and the least developed countries on the theme "Partnerships and health", held on 8 July 2009.

39. Ministers, policymakers, business leaders and innovators in the field of information and communication technologies for development from around the world converged in Monterrey, Mexico, for a meeting of the Global Forum of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), held from 2 to 4 September 2009, on the theme "ICT and innovation for education". The event brought together information technology leaders and the development community under the umbrella of the Global Alliance for a focused dialogue on emerging issues and challenges in the field of ICT for development, particularly in the areas of education and innovation, and fostered cooperation among Governments, the private sector and

²¹ See A/C.2.59/3, chap. I.

²² See <http://www.un-gaid.org/>.

civil society. A major outcome of the Global Forum was the formation of a broad new partnership under the Global Alliance for ICT and Development umbrella on ICT and education. This global partnership on education for all in the digital age involves leading United Nations agencies and private sector organizations working collaboratively to define the principles and support the targets derived from the Millennium Development Goals to be advanced with ICT applications by 2015.

Internet Governance Forum

40. The Internet Governance Forum²³ secretariat is mandated to facilitate international deliberations on public policy issues related to Internet governance. It operates under the supervision of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs through the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, which also provides it with administrative support. The Internet Governance Forum secretariat is funded through extrabudgetary contributions. The Secretary-General established a Multistakeholder Advisory Group to assist him in convening the Forum. Members of the Advisory Group include representatives of Governments, the private sector and civil society, including the academic and technical communities, in all regions. A description of the activities of the Internet Governance Forum is included in the annual report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels, which is submitted to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at the request of the Economic and Social Council. The first three Forum meetings were held in Athens in 2006, Rio de Janeiro in 2007 and Hyderabad, India, in 2008.

41. The fourth meeting of the Internet Governance Forum was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 15 to 18 November 2009. The overall theme of the Forum was "Internet governance: creating opportunities for all". With more than 1,800 participants from 112 countries, the Internet Governance Forum held in Sharm el-Sheikh had greater attendance than previous meetings: 96 governments were represented, and 122 media representatives were accredited. Parallel to the main sessions, more than 100 workshops, best practice forums, dynamic collation meetings and open forums were scheduled around the broad themes of the main sessions and the overall mandate of the Internet Governance Forum.

E. Advisory assistance

42. Through its three substantive branches, the Division carries out technical cooperation activities in the form of advisory services and training activities on subjects falling within its mandate. The overall thrust of the Division's technical cooperation programme is to assist, at the request of national and local Governments, in the capacity-building of Government officials and institutions and, increasingly, of civil society organizations for the reform and modernization of public administration, in particular the focus areas defined in the recent reform exercise of the Division. It should be noted that the findings and recommendations of advisory missions and the outcomes of training activities, including their publications, feed into the normative and advocacy work of the Division and provide support to the intergovernmental dialogue of the Economic and Social Council and the Committee.

²³ See <http://www.intgovforum.org/>.

43. The budget of technical cooperation projects comes from the United Nations Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation, the United Nations Development Account, extrabudgetary sources, such as UNDP and UNDP-administered funds, and numerous funds in trust, with contributions from donor countries and other agencies.

44. In addition to training courses available online, a number of training workshops for the participants from the developing countries were organized in 2009. With the aim of promoting policy dialogue and supporting the building of the policymaking capacities and technical skills of Government officials and practitioners from developing countries, the Division facilitated capacity-building workshops, held in Addis Ababa (17-19 February 2009), Kampala, Uganda (5 and 6 March 2009), Manama (28 May 2009), Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Plurinational State of Bolivia (7-10 September 2009), and San José (17-20 November 2009).

45. The Division continued to support its engagement in several technical cooperation activities with the aim of increasing the capacity of the public sector, in particular through the effective use of ICT for more effective and efficient public service delivery. It provided substantive support and technical assistance for the implementation of e-government projects in Djibouti, Ghana and Togo. Technical assistance missions were also conducted in Bahrain (May and July 2009), Colombia (October 2008), Lesotho (June 2008), Oman (May and November 2008) and Singapore (June 2008) to strengthen their respective e-government capacities to develop solutions and services, policies and strategies.

Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

46. In 2009, the Division continued to substantively backstop the technical cooperation project on the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.²⁴ This project, undertaken in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), aims to support a more efficient and transparent functioning of parliaments through the application of ICT to their deliberative procedures.

47. Through its online portal, the Centre continued to provide all stakeholders with access at the global level to information, research, guidelines and activities produced and undertaken by its partners and other institutions. The online legal repository for ICT-related legislation was considerably expanded to facilitate the sharing of legislative practices among legislatures and interested parties. The repository gathered 450 laws from 121 countries on nine main topics: child online protection; cybercrime; e-accessibility; e-commerce; electronic communications; e-signature; freedom of information; open standards; and privacy.

48. The Division, the United States House of Representatives and IPU jointly organized the World e-Parliament Conference 2009 at the United States House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., from 3 to 5 November 2009. The Board of the Global Centre met on the margins of the Conference to discuss its future work programme and to adopt the principles of a 10-year strategic plan for stimulating parliamentary action to develop modern information societies and expand the use of ICT in parliaments. The event assembled more than 400 elected members and staff of 95 parliaments from around the world to discuss policies and applications relating to the use of modern technologies in parliaments. At the conference, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs was joined by the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Speaker of the People's Assembly of

²⁴ See <http://www.ictparliament.org/>.

Egypt and the Deputy-Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, in their capacity as co-Chairs of the Board of the Global Centre, and the IPU Secretary-General.

United Nations Project Office on Governance

49. The United Nations Project Office on Governance²⁵ was established in June 2006 following the sixth global forum on reinventing government, at which participants called for the creation of an international office to promote transparency and participatory governance around the world. Formally, the Office is a technical cooperation trust fund project executed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs under the overall direction of the Division and the Ministry of Public Administration and Safety of the Government of the Republic of Korea.

50. The particular role of the Office is to assist Member States in improving the quality of governance and public administration in order to enhance conditions for their citizens, improve human development and contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It does so through research and knowledge-sharing on the various facets of institutional development, electronic/mobile government and citizen engagement.

51. In pursuing these objectives, the Office promotes cooperation among public agencies, private sector firms and civil society organizations, while facilitating both North-South and South-South exchanges of good practices in governance and public administration. While the perspective of the Office is global, its activities are strongly rooted in Asian and Pacific island countries, where it has considerable expertise, and is able to draw on the expansive knowledge of the Korea International Cooperation Agency and other actors in the region.

52. Other major ongoing technical cooperation projects include:

- Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan²⁶
- Support to justice and harmonization of legal texts, Djibouti
- Poverty reduction strategy, Gabon
- Economic governance: planning for development, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Capacity-building for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, Chad
- Enhancing the role of national, economic and social councils in Francophone Africa
- Establishment of a poverty observatory, Mali
- Poverty reduction strategy and capacity development, Togo
- E-government initiative in Africa, Ghana
- Africa governance inventory, phase II
- Strengthening the capacity of parliaments in Africa to harness ICT
- Support to justice and human rights promotion, Djibouti

²⁵ See <http://www.unpog.org/>.

²⁶ See <http://www.parliaments.info/>.

- Euro-African partnership for decentralized governance, phase II, Tuscany region
- Support to public sector reform and modernization project, Togo
- Administrative governance as an integral part of the governance programme 2008-2011, Democratic Republic of the Congo

III. Approved activities for 2010-2011

53. During the biennium 2010-2011, the following final outputs will be delivered:
- (a) Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies (regular budget):
 - (i) General Assembly:
 - a. Substantive servicing of meetings: General Assembly (4); panels as required by the Assembly on emerging issues in the public sector (2);
 - b. Parliamentary documentation: reports mandated by resolutions of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth sessions, on public administration and development (through the Economic and Social Council) (2);
 - (ii) Economic and Social Council:
 - a. Substantive servicing of meetings: Economic and Social Council (12); panels as required by the Council on emerging trends in the public sector (2);
 - b. Parliamentary documentation: reports on the ninth and tenth meetings of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (2);
 - (iii) Committee of Experts on Public Administration:
 - a. Substantive servicing of meetings: ninth and tenth sessions of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (28);
 - b. Parliamentary documentation: analytical/working papers on selected issues (6); analytical/working papers on the annual ministerial review theme of the Economic and Social Council (2); report on the programme in public administration, finance and development (2);
 - (iv) Ad hoc expert groups: six expert groups on: improved mechanisms for online public service delivery; developing human resource capacities for effective delivery of public services; improving public service for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; the role of the Government in information and communication technologies for development; public administration in the context of the thematic areas to be identified by the annual ministerial reviews for the high-level segments of the substantive sessions of 2010 and 2011 of the Economic and Social Council (2);
 - (b) Other substantive activities (regular budget):
 - (i) Recurrent publications: compendium of best practices and innovation in public administration (2); compendium of information and communication technology applications on electronic government (1); compendium of electronic/mobile-government innovative practices and lessons learned (1); United Nations Public Service Awards report (2); *World Public Sector Report* (1);

(ii) Non-recurrent publications: developing human resources capacities for effective delivery of public services (1); improved mechanisms for online public service delivery (1); improving public service for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (1); public administration in the context of the thematic area to be identified by the annual ministerial reviews for the high-level segments of the substantive sessions of 2010 and 2011 (2) of the Economic and Social Council; e-government strategies for improved public administration (1);

(iii) Special events: support for the observance of United Nations Public Service Day (2); United Nations Public Service Awards competition (2); support to regional ministerial meetings on emerging trends in the public sector (in cooperation with the regional commissions) (2);

(iv) Technical material (regular budget and extrabudgetary): Governance World Watch (24); maintenance and updating of the online database on past initiatives of the United Nations Public Service Awards programme (1); maintenance and updating of the online database on the administration and cost of elections (1); maintenance and updating of the online website on the global knowledge repository on electronic/mobile-government (1); maintenance and updating of the online website on the peacebuilding portal in terms of conflict management organizations, programmes and practitioners (1); maintenance and updating of the online website on the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (1); maintenance and updating of the online website on the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament (1); maintenance and updating of the online website on the Internet Governance Forum (1); maintenance and updating of the online website on the United Nations global e-government readiness knowledge base (1); maintenance and updating of the online website on ethics, transparency and accountability (1); maintenance and updating of the online website on innovation in public administration in the Euro-Mediterranean region (1); maintenance and updating of the database on African governance online inventory (1); maintenance and updating of the United Nations Public Administration Network (1); public administration country profiles (1); newsletter of the United Nations Public Administration Network (8);

(v) Audio-visual resources: online training courses (4);

(vi) Substantive servicing of inter-agency meetings: support to global and regional technical meetings organized by partner institutions (5);

(c) Technical cooperation (regular budget and extrabudgetary):

(i) Advisory services: needs assessment and diagnostic missions related to the substantive expertise of the subprogramme in the areas of public administration and finance and socio-economic governance (30); guidelines, manuals and training materials for application to the public sector resulting from requests for training assistance from developing countries and countries with economies in transition (4); training seminars, workshops and policy dialogues at the request of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the areas of public policy and public economics, public administration, finance and socio-economic governance, with particular emphasis on initiatives fostering South-South cooperation and innovation in public administration (8);

- (ii) Field projects: field projects (some in partnership with UNDP and other operational entities) aimed at strengthening the institutional and management capacity of interested developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the areas of public administration and finance and socio-economic governance (60).

IV. Proposed strategic framework for the period 2012-2013

54. The Committee is invited to provide its comments on the biennial programme plan for the period 2012-2013 for subprogramme 8, Public administration and development management, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs. The proposed biennial programme plan will be submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fiftieth session, in 2010. Its recommendations thereon will be transmitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session when it considers the proposed strategic framework for the period 2012-2013.

55. The proposed strategic framework is as follows:

Objective of the Organization: To promote effective, efficient, transparent, accountable and citizen-oriented public administrations in the areas of: (a) institutional and human resources capacity development; (b) electronic/mobile-Government development; and (c) citizen engagement and information communications technology for development management

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Indicators of achievement

(a) Improved accessibility of information and knowledge-sharing through the United Nations Publication Administration Network and Public Administration Knowledge Space	(a) (i) Increased number of visits/views to and downloads from the United Nations Public Administration Network (ii) Increased number of stakeholders in the area of public administration and governance, benefiting from usage of an online public administration knowledge base
(b) Enhanced facilitation of dialogue, resolutions and actions on public administration issues effectively supported through improved publications, products and services	(b) (i) Increased number of references/recommendations/decisions found in resolutions of intergovernmental bodies (ii) Increased number of references made or recommendations/decisions drawn from external publications, products and services (iii) Increased positive feedback on subprogramme advocacy, advisory and training activities
(c) Increased capacity of Governments at the national and local levels to strengthen professionalism, accountability and excellence in the public sector	(c) (i) Increased participation in the United Nations Public Service Awards and United Nations Public Service Day (ii) Increased participation in online and offline training (iii) Increased number of advisory services requested by countries (iv) Increased number of methodological and technical recommendations implemented by Governments at the national, regional and local levels as a result of advisory services and technical cooperation projects.

56. The strategy to achieve the aforementioned expected accomplishments is based on an integrated approach comprising the provision of substantive support to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, the United Nations Public Service Awards and United Nations Public Service Day, and the provision of analytical research, advocacy, advisory services, training and knowledge-sharing in public administration and development management. It is aimed at:

(a) Promoting greater awareness, common approaches, understanding and sustainable policy options among Governments in key substantive areas of public administration and development management;

(b) Strengthening partnerships and cooperation with other international, regional and professional organizations, both public and private, within and outside of the United Nations system to build an online global knowledge base in public administration and development management that is comprehensive, useful and easy to access;

(c) Providing analytical research, advocacy, advisory services, training and knowledge-sharing, particularly to countries or related institutions requesting assistance, and to developing countries, especially the least developed countries, countries emerging from conflict or crisis and countries with economies in transition.

V. Recommendations

57. Through the annual session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, the Secretariat receives guidance from the Committee on its scope of activities. At its eighth session, in 2009, the Committee, through a resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2009, requested the Secretariat to consider the following in its programme of work:

(a) The Secretariat continues to give due recognition to innovative public sector initiatives by national and local Governments through the work of the United Nations Public Service Day and the United Nations Public Service Awards in support of the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(b) The Secretariat further enhances its support for capacity-building through analytical research, advisory services and online and offline training, emphasizing trust-building, citizen engagement, human resources and institutional development;

(c) The Secretariat, in the light of the fact that the current economic and financial crisis is a daunting challenge to public administration, should enhance its important work for the development of public sector institutions and resources for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, by further developing its analytical and advisory capacity and further integrating research and analysis with the normative and operational work and by continuing to work with other partners in developing joint products;

(d) In order to facilitate the advocacy and the implementation of the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society, the Secretariat

should continue to support and facilitate the work of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, the Internet Governance Forum and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, and the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society action lines on e-government-related issues.

58. The Committee is invited to comment on the activities carried out in 2009 and to make recommendations on priorities for the biennium 2010-2011, as well as the strategic directions set for the period 2012-2013 in the proposed strategic framework, through:

- Taking note of the work of the Secretariat in 2009 in implementing the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance
- Taking note of the activities approved for 2010-2011 and making any suggestions thereon
- Taking note of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2012-2013 and making any comments thereon.



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Public administration perspective on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

Information and communications technology and gender equality: new opportunities and challenges for public administration to implement the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

Many women are alienated from the outreach of governance structures for reasons that include mobility, level of education, and access to infrastructure and resources. But the most important reason is discrimination and exclusions owing to societal norms and attitudes regarding the role of women. Redressing this marginalization is the aim of millennium development goal 3 — gender equality and the empowerment of women, which promotes in particular their inclusion in economic, social and political development processes.

Since the mid-1990s, most governments have increasingly recognized information and communications technology (ICT) as a major tool to improve public administration practices and operations, with reference to at least two key objectives: (a) enhancing service delivery to all, especially marginalized groups; and (b) providing mechanisms for civic engagement by all.

However, the empowerment of women and their active participation in e-Government programmes will not occur if the approaches and ICT-supported contents are not gender-sensitive and committed to removing gender inequalities.

* E/C.16/2010/1.

To this end, public administration can include women more actively in the development of ICT tools with the aim of strengthening their participation in economic and political processes. More importantly, ICT can be used effectively to organize social mobilization to address a negative perception about women's role in society and create an awareness of women's rights.

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I. Introduction

1. Advancing gender equality and empowering women has cross-cutting impacts and hence contributes significantly to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. For example, enhancing women's educational attainment positively impacts on maternal and child health. Gainful employment of women contributes to family income and hence has a positive impact on poverty.

2. In recent years, various developing countries have made significant progress on the immense possibilities for using e-Governance as a platform for stronger democratic processes based on higher participation and accountability.¹ This requires moving beyond targeting efficiency "to embrace up-scaling, citizen-centred and broad-based use of information and communications technology (ICT)",² a movement that is particularly important to bring enormous gains towards gender equality and social justice owing to the potential of e-participation.

3. The challenge to public administration is not only the delivery of services but also addressing the full-fledged participation of all citizens, especially women. Addressing the gender dimensions of e-Governance poses an added set of challenges. Information and communications technology (ICT) is affected by and in turn affects the different opportunities that exist for men and women in relation to education, training and skills development, employment and working conditions, content development, and access to power structures and decision-making processes.³ ICT can be an effective tool for enhancing the provision of public service to citizens as well as for economic development, while promoting increased education and knowledge. However, women are vastly underrepresented in government, in business, in political and social institutions; they continue to access and use ICT to a much lesser extent than men. Men still hold most managerial positions in telecommunications companies and regulatory or policymaking bodies; regulatory decisions are usually made without any gender-impact analysis; and service licences are handled by private companies without due attention to equal opportunity policies.⁴

4. Women tend to make up the majority of those who remain alienated from the outreach of governance structures for reasons that include mobility, level of education, and access to infrastructure and resources. The most important barrier is the discrimination and exclusions because of negative societal norms and attitudes regarding the role of women. The use of ICT in public administration and e-governance efforts can provide an opportunity to reach those who have been left out by transforming information and communications policies into opportunities to

¹ A. Gurumurthy, P. Singh, A. Mundkur and M. Swamy, eds., *Gender in the Information Society: Emerging Issues* (Bangkok, United Nations Development Programme Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme, Elsevier 2006). Available from <http://www.apdip.net/publications/ict4d/GenderIS.pdf>.

² Radhika Lal (2006), "WSIS: Some reflections on emerging discourses and frameworks", in Gurumurthy, op. cit., p. 31.

³ Nancy Hafkin and Sophia Huyer, *Engendering the Knowledge Society: measuring women's participation* (Montreal, ORBICOM, 2007).

⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women, *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women through ICT* (New York, 2005). Available from www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/w2000-09.05-ict-e.pdf.

increase national growth and development, by providing tools to overcome social and institutional barriers; and by strengthening participation in economic and political processes. More importantly, ICT can be used effectively to organize social mobilization to address a negative perception about women's role in society, and create an awareness of women's rights.

5. However, ICT-based public administration and e-governance strategies also run the risk of further marginalizing women in view of their generically low level of access to ICT. The present note will describe the measures governments can consider adopting to avoid this risk.

II. Review of the internationally agreed development goals and Millennium Development Goals on gender equality goals

6. Gender equality and ICT are relevant cross-cutting issues within the global development agenda. When appropriately interconnected, they can provide additional impact on achieving sector goals individually, as well as encouraging faster and more effective development. The theme of "gender equality in ICT" has been on the international agenda for at least 15 years. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995)⁵ was the first international policy framework that recognized gender issues in relation to ICT, thus acknowledging the need for women's full participation at all levels in news media channels as well as promoting a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women.

7. The Millennium Development Goals provide a useful framework for public administration to achieve major development gains, especially towards millennium development goal 3 — promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, in particular the inclusion of women and girls in processes of economic, social and political development. ICT provides important tools to promote gender equality, enhance women's participation and empowerment and help women to achieve greater success in income-generating and domestic activities. ICT can also accelerate gender equality in the achievement of other Millennium Development Goals.

8. For instance, ICT can help to achieve gender equality under goal 1 — eradicating extreme poverty and hunger — by providing real-time information on agriculture, weather, pricing and marketing to support women's food production and income-earning enterprises, as well as helping women to care for their families and improve their living standard. With regard to goal 2 — achieving universal primary education, ICT can help to deliver literacy and education to girls and women wherever they live or work and thus open up new opportunities and provide flexible learning times. Concerning goals 4 and 5 on reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, ICT can provide improved information on nutrition and agriculture, facilitate the formation of health networks and information to health professionals and monitor health trends while assisting the provision of primary health care. With regard to goal 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ICT can supply information on prevention and treatment and, again, establish health networks and information for health professionals and interaction with patients in

⁵ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

rural areas, including mobile HIV testing and counselling facilities assembled within minivans. For goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability, ICT can facilitate information on the environmental situation, weather forecasts and sustainable agricultural practices; it can also disseminate women's traditional knowledge and experience to promote sustainable development.

9. One of the most important international considerations on gender issues and ICT came from the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (held in Geneva in 2003⁶ and in Tunis in 2005⁷). Despite insufficient attention to gender equality in the World Summit on the Information Society process and agenda, the Declaration of Principles that emerged from the first phase of the Summit encompassed a strong commitment to women's human rights and empowerment and underlined the importance of their participation in shaping the information society, as expressed below:⁸

"We affirm that development of ICTs provides enormous opportunities for women, who should be an integral part of, and key actors, in the Information Society. We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end."⁹

10. The 2003 World Summit on the Information Society Plan of Action¹⁰ called for a balanced and diverse portrayal of women and men in the media and referred to the need for gender-specific content, special measures for women and girls as well as gender perspectives in ICT education and education in general and training and jobs and career development for women with respect to ICT. Of particular importance in the Plan of Action was the recognition of the need to monitor developments and to devise gender-sensitive indicators.¹¹

11. Subsequently, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) has played an important role in the implementation of the gender equality provisions of the World Summit on the Information Society, especially through the work of its Community of Expertise on Gender, notably the International Task Force on Women and ICT.¹²

⁶ WSIS-03 GENEVA DOC 0004.

⁷ See A/60/687.

⁸ H. Jensen, "Women, media and ICT in UN politics: progress or backlash?" In Gurumurthy, *op. cit.*, 2006.

⁹ Declaration of Principles, First Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Geneva, 10-12 December 2003 (WSIS-03 GENEVA DOC 0004-F1, para. 12).

¹⁰ WSIS-03 GENEVA DOC 0005.

¹¹ H. Jensen, *op. cit.*, 2006 and N. Hafkin, "Gender Issues at the World Summit on the Information Society", *Information Technologies and International Development*, vol. 1, No. 3-4 (2004), pp. 55-59. Available from: <http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/view/Article/158>.

¹² See www.un-gaid.org, <http://www.un-gaid.org/Networks/CommunitiesofExpertise/Cross-cuttingthemes/WomenandICT/Taskforce/tabid/936/language/en-US/Default.aspx>, <http://www.itfwomenict.org>.

12. According to the background note by the Secretary-General on achieving the Millennium Development Goals,¹³ advancing gender equality and empowering women is one of the core challenges and critical policy areas for the achievement of development goals.

13. Within these goals, the Secretary-General defined main gender challenges to include access to education, employment, reproductive health, property rights, productive resources and capital, and participation in economic and public life. All these challenges are interconnected: gender trends in economic opportunity and livelihoods, and quality of health and life will affect the ability of women to access and benefit from e-Governance strategies and services. However, the following four key areas of e-Governance, when implemented with an understanding of gender barriers, risks and opportunities, are key pillars to improving women's access to services, their participation in local governance and their quality of life, and will facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The key areas are:

- (a) Special attention to women's access to ICT;
- (b) Design of ICT and e-Governance policies and strategies to integrate gender concerns;
- (c) Providing equal opportunity to both men and women with information on and access to government services and programmes;
- (d) Increasing the e-participation of women in political and democratic processes.

Public administrations can and should incorporate all of these pillars in their e-Government efforts and programmes.

III. Challenges and opportunities for public administration in achieving gender equality and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals through ICT

14. According to recent research,¹⁴ governments in both developed and developing countries have lagged behind in mainstreaming gender perspectives into policies and opportunities for using ICT (in particular, the Internet and mobile technologies) towards implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Considerable lack of progress in this area arises from the adoption of a gender-blind approach (i.e., not taking into account different effects on women and men) concerning the introduction of new information technologies in e-Governance. Attention to gender issues by public administration at the planning stages and throughout policy implementation can

¹³ United Nations (2008), *Committing to action: achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. Background note by the Secretary-General for the High-level event on the Millennium Development Goals, United Nations Headquarters, 25 September 2008. Available from www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel.

¹⁴ This includes numerous sources, for example: Ana Laura Rodríguez Gusiá, *Interferencias en la conexión: las TIC y la desigualdad de género en los planes de igualdad de oportunidad y las agendas digitales de América Latina*. In G. Bonder, *Creadoras en la Sociedad del Conocimiento* (Buenos Aires, La Crujía) (forthcoming).

meet these challenges and reap rewards for citizens, including growth with equity in their respective countries.

15. There are myriad issues constraining women in developing countries from accessing and profiting from the benefits of information technology, ranging from sociocultural to technological aspects and the absence of relevant content in most ICT sources. If public administrations are aware of these issues and address them, they should be able to provide enhanced services and promote enhanced participation.

Sociocultural factors

16. In many developing countries, particularly in Africa where home access to ICT (whether computers, mobile phones, television or radios) is rare, many women must travel to public venues, such as telecentres or cybercafés. Several factors inhibit women's access to these facilities. These may be locations where women do not feel comfortable, or women may even fear harassment as a result of entering a "male space".¹⁵ Women's multiple roles and heavy domestic responsibilities limit their leisure time, and centres may not be open when it is convenient for women to visit them. The mobility of women (both in the sense of access to transport and ability to leave the home) is usually more limited than that of men. At home women generally have less time to listen to the radio or lack access and privacy to use landline telephones.

Rural-urban divide/infrastructure

17. ICT infrastructure itself can become a gender-related issue as it tends to be conducive to well-developed urban areas, while it is poor or absent in rural areas. In virtually all developing countries, telecommunications infrastructure, as well as electricity, is weaker and less available in rural and poor urban areas. Because women represent a large percentage of rural population — particularly in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of the Caribbean¹⁶ — they have fewer opportunities than men to access new technologies.¹⁶

Income inequality

18. Access to information technology is costly — whether computers, mobile phones, television or even radio. As women tend to have less discretionary income, they are less likely than men to be able to pay for access. Not only do women in general have less disposable income than men, they tend to have more family-related responsibilities and are more likely than men to spend their earnings on education, food, clothes and other basic needs than on information communications tools.

¹⁵ Woldekidan Kifle Amde, "Exploring how gender mediates ICT access and use in Ethiopia", 2008. Unpublished paper for Research ICT Africa, p. 34.

¹⁶ Nancy Hafkin and Helen Hambly Odame, "Gender, ICTs and Agriculture: a situation analysis for the fifth Consultative Expert Meeting of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) ICT Observatory Meeting on Gender and Agriculture in the Information Society", 2002. Available from <http://www.commit.com/en/node/211936/348>.

Language

19. While the overall preponderance of the English language on the Internet has been in decline since the year 2000, the Internet is still dominated by major world languages. Lack of education prevents women in developing countries from speaking or reading in non-local idioms. Therefore, language can pose a further barrier to women's access to the Internet and other social media tools.

Content and information needs

20. This is a topic which is often neglected, but of major importance in discussing constraints to women's use of ICT. Information becomes knowledge when the local context is added; thus linking information to the user's environment and particular situation is very important. Internet-based platforms, such as e-Government, e-commerce, websites and so forth, rarely provide the information that poor rural women in developing countries want and need — localized and contextual social, economic and political information relevant to their daily lives — in a language and format that they can easily access.¹⁷

Levels of education/computer/technical skills

21. The Millennium Development Goals related to gender equality are based on improving women and girls' education (41 million girls worldwide are excluded from primary and secondary education¹⁸). This underlines the important message that, overall, girls and women have lower rates of education than men.

22. The majority of the world's illiterate are women and far fewer women than men have computer literacy. The gender education gap is reflected in science and technology education, where there is a major concern about the number of girls in science and technology fields of study. Women in general have less access to technological skills training and development that would enable them to gain paid employment. All of these problems leave women and girls poorly placed to benefit from the potential advantages of the information society. Paradoxically, the new technologies could offer many opportunities for women and girls to gain the educational and technical skills required to participate equally in the knowledge economy.

Gender patterns of technology use

23. Many gender differences emerge in the use of ICT, with women's usage being generally lower than men's. There are, however, many nuances, such as the type of ICT and the kind of usage, as well as differences between developed and developing countries, regions, cultures and other factors.

24. While many e-Government efforts are directed at the Internet, overall Internet access and usage remains low in many developing countries. A major factor is the lack of easy availability of computers, Internet connectivity, and the relatively high

¹⁷ Huyer, Hafkin et al., op. cit., 2005; Gurumurthy, op. cit., 2006; Huyer, "We are no longer ignorant: e-Governance strategies to overcome the gender divide", 2009. Unpublished document.

¹⁸ Rashid Ahmed, Samer Al-Samarrai, Nadir Altinok, Massimo Amadio et al., *Overcoming Inequality: why governance matters. Education for All Global Monitoring Report* (Paris, UNESCO, 2009).

level of skill needed to operate them. When a country's overall Internet penetration remains low and is concentrated in major urban areas, women's overall access is very likely to be much lower than the national average. A large portion of the world's women does not use, or even know about the Internet, and women still compose the minority group of Internet users in almost all developing countries.¹⁹

Attitudes towards technology

25. Sociocultural norms may induce both technophobia and a disinterest in technology by women. Cultural attitudes often discriminate against women's access to technology and technology education. Girls are frequently discouraged from technical and scientific subjects and women themselves sometimes subscribe to the attitude that technology is something for men, with respect to both its use and its utility.

Relevance of gender-friendly public administration approaches

26. New information technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones have positive potential effects on the lives of women in developing countries, including perceived increased freedom and decreased tolerance for domestic abuse. However, there is equal or greater evidence, both in developed and developing countries, showing the persistence of pernicious attitudes, norms and standards that militate against gender equality.²⁰

27. This raises an extremely difficult question, which is: To what extent can social and economic development as well as women's empowerment, including through the use of ICT for gender equality, really ensue when traditional gender attitudes and role stereotypes endure? Technology in and of itself cannot bring about gender equality. Technological change must be accompanied by changes in laws, attitudes, norms and culture, while supported by a public administration framework. The belief that empowering women through technology will benefit all needs to be shared by both men and women. This awareness must be included in e-Governance strategies and public administration policies.

28. E-Government can reach and help women by transforming communication avenues into opportunities to realize balanced national growth and development. It can also provide tools to overcome social and institutional barriers and strengthen women's participation in bureaucratic, economic and political processes.²¹

¹⁹ *Financing for Gender Equality: women in science, engineering and technology*, 2008. Available from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/speech2008/2008%20Science%20and%20technology%20India.pdf>

²⁰ Dayoung Lee, "The impact of mobile phones on the status of women in India", 2009. Unpublished paper, Stanford University, Department of Economics. Available from <http://mobileactive.org/research/impact-mobile-phones-status-women-india>. On the negative effects of information technology on women's freedom, see, for example, Marie-Helene Mottin-Sylla, *The Gender Digital Divide in Francophone Africa: a harsh reality*. Dakar Etudes et recherches No. 244 (ENDA editions, 2005).

²¹ Vikas Nath, "Empowerment of women through ICT-enabled networks: towards the optimum ICT-impact model". In N. Hafkin, *Cinderella or Cyberella? Empowering Women in the Knowledge Society* (Bloomfield, Connecticut, Kumarian Press, 2006).

Lack of gender analysis

29. Many telecommunication regulatory agencies both in the North and in the South have given insufficient attention to gender needs assessment/gender analysis, resulting in regulatory structures based on the assumption that men and women have equal access and similar needs. Many regulatory agencies have focused on universal access and rural communication services, but few have looked at the basic issues of availability, accessibility and affordability from a developing country gender perspective.²²

IV. Application of ICT in public administration and governance to help women gain access to government information, participate in decision-making and receive social services

30. The quest for gender equality may define some of the choices and challenges that public administration frameworks need to make in determining e-Governance strategies. It is widely accepted that ICT can become an effective tool for Governments to provide services 24/7 to citizens, as well as to promote economic development and increase education and knowledge.

31. Public administration e-strategies that engage all members of society, especially women, need to be flexible, feasible and appropriate to local socio-economic and infrastructural contexts as well as tailored for specific groups — the underprivileged, women, youth, the elderly and those living in remote areas. These e-strategies need to be implemented on the basis of transparency, equality of treatment of all users and respect of privacy. They also need to conform to universal access strategies and be respectful of international conventions.²³

32. Integrating gender awareness within all aspects of public administration will both improve the quality of life of all citizens and present an opportunity to promote the well-being and inclusion of all citizens in a meaningful and positive way. Effective ICT for all considers the needs of women and does not further entrench gender disparities. Engendering e-Governance includes awareness on the part of policymakers that men and women may have different needs and priorities. Therefore, different options need to be provided concerning access to the availability of ICT and to basic public services. In summary, engendering e-Government means recognizing women's rights to information and communication needs, interests and capacities, making all services accessible to them, using non-sexist language, and encouraging their full participation as well as monitoring gender impacts.

33. The use of gender analysis in policy design can contribute to the goal of gender equality. The experience of women's organizations and civil society groups

²² C. Sanford and A. Bhattacharjee, "IT implementation in a developing country municipality: a socio-cognitive analysis", *Journal of Global Information Management*, 2007, vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 19-41.

²³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Compendium of Innovative E-government Practices*, vol. I (2005) and vol. II (2006); *E-Participation and E-Government: understanding the present and creating the future*. Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting, Budapest, Hungary, 27 and 28 July 2006 (United Nations, New York, 2007); and Réseau genre et TIC (Regentic), "Citoyennes africaines de la société de l'information" (Dakar, 2004).

in many developing countries furnishes a number of useful approaches. These include building online communities and networks; expanding women's access to global and local markets; developing women's ICT capabilities to further empowerment goals; deploying ICT for human development in health, nutrition and education; and promoting advocacy, mobilization and solidarity-building. Public administrations can take advantage of these foundations and strategies to address gender equality and accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

34. Until recently, however, many national ICT development frameworks and strategies paid little or no attention to gender equality goals and women's advancement.²⁴ Conversely, national machineries on gender equality and policies often overlooked technology as well.²⁵

35. The mobile phone has become increasingly important for women's access to ICT in developing countries. New developments in the convergence of technologies (such as mobile phones, cameras, radio and music and video players) can help to further expand mobile phone networks and increase the amount and kind of information they can provide for women as well as men. The remaining barrier for women — that of cost — is also falling, as ICT transactional costs are gradually lowering globally. Phone companies are working to make their low-end mobile phones data-capable, while many inexpensive phones are data-ready.²⁶ One of the most exciting developments where rapid progress is being made for increased access for poor women in developing countries is that of combining the mobile phone with voice access to the Internet.²⁷

36. However, it should not be forgotten that successful access models can often include the use of "older" technologies, such as radio, television and print. Radio, in particular, has the potential to be a useful technology for women, as it can be used in areas where electricity is irregular or non-existent; radio is a medium that distributes content in local languages and is relatively inexpensive.

37. A number of strategies and practices have enabled women to gain access to government information, participate in decision-making and receive social services. They include the following.

Access to and information on governmental services and programmes

38. ICT can expand the outreach of governmental services and provide increased value, accountability and transparency as users can use e-Governance services to

²⁴ Chat Ramilo Garcia and Pi Villanueva, *Issues, Policies and Outcomes: are ICT policies addressing gender equality?* (Bangkok, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2001).

²⁵ Hafkin, "Gender and ICT policy in developing countries: an overview", *Asian Pacific Women's Information Network Centre (APW/INC) Journal*, 2003, vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 32-64 and Huyer, "Handbook on Gender and E-Government in Africa", report prepared for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (Addis Ababa, 2007). Unpublished.

²⁶ A. Twinomugisha, "How information communication technology (ICT) is transforming Africa", 2009. Available from: <http://www.africabusinesssource.com/articles/innovation/how-information-communication-technology-ict-is-transforming-africa/>.

²⁷ Amit A. Nanavati, Sheetal K. Agarwal, Arun Kumar, Nitendra Rajput et al., "Farmers' voices on the Spoken Web", *ICT Update* (October 2009). Available from <http://ictupdate.cta.int/en/Feature-Articles/Farmers-voices-on-the-Spoken-Web>.

find, among other things, the names and contact information of local officials and their roles and responsibilities, rules and regulations, and so forth. ICT can also enable citizens to interact with their government and local electoral bodies and representatives on issues such as grievances, new services, the status of existing services and the reporting of corruption and harassment. Women, in particular, benefit from lower transportation costs and faster responses. In societies where it is not acceptable for women to interact with men outside of their families, online access can allow them to act on their own behalf.²⁸

39. In India, for instance, government service centres have been set up across the country to introduce C2C (citizen-to-citizen) and C2G (citizen-to-government) services in rural areas, particularly to women.²⁹ Service centres were put under the control of women's self-help groups. Over time, this has increased women's use of the services and technologies offered at the centres, while promoting communication and transactions between local administrations and the community.

40. Other approaches to access enhancement include the Nigerian mixed communication and technology services provided to poor communities, which include toll-free telephone communication with service providers, computers for recording and storing complaints, requests and suggestions and for the monitoring of the status of complaints already filed. This system improved the transparency of local government processes. The voice access and local meeting centre components made it especially accessible to local people, in particular women.³⁰

41. While access to ICT is fundamental, it is not sufficient by itself. The percentage of women's Internet usage does not correlate directly with a country's rate of Internet penetration. Unless specific, targeted gender goals and strategies are implemented in ICT projects, women would not have equal access or benefit to the same extent as men.³¹ If women are not directly targeted as beneficiaries of e-Governance, they will not be able to access information on government services, health and other issues which they need to support their livelihoods and well-being; nor will they be able to interact meaningfully with their Governments or participate in local governance forums and decision-making processes. Unless specific efforts are made to meet women's information needs, they will not find information that is relevant and useful. Encouraging and including the perspectives of women in policy design and implementation and ensuring that they receive the benefits of e-governance would enhance the prospects of addressing gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals. Conversely, these goals cannot be achieved without the inclusion of women.

42. India's award-winning "Bhoomi e-governance project" is an example of how a focus on administrative efficiency and information dissemination overlooked women's participation. Under the Bhoomi project, which involved the computerization of 20 million landowner records in the state of Karnataka, any farmer could obtain a copy of the land ownership document required to secure bank loans for a charge of Rs 15 (about US\$ 0.32). However, analysis has shown that not only did the project have marginal relevance for women, but Bhoomi also actually

²⁸ Nath, *op. cit.*, 2006.

²⁹ See <http://www.westgodavari.org>.

³⁰ G. Sharma, N. Raj and B. Shadrach, *Knowledge and Research Programme on Improving Efficiency of Pro-Poor Public Services* (New Delhi, One World South Asia, 2005).

³¹ Huyer, Hafkin et al., *op. cit.*, 2005; Hafkin and Odame, *op. cit.*, 2002.

adversely affected poor women landowners by enabling loan sharks to identify and target them. Few women landowners knew of the system and those who did discovered that officials at the kiosk were unable to help them to obtain the certificates they needed.³²

43. However, once all the elements are in place, e-government can bring enormous benefits in terms of gender equality, citizen-centred participation in governance and social justice. Evidence also comes from India, where women members of a right-to-information non-governmental organization created slogans that spread from Rajasthan to across India that helped to first gain access to government records and subsequently monitor spending and then influence gender-based budgeting.³³

Promotion of women's participation in political and democratic processes

44. A typical example of how ICT can promote the participation of women in political and democratic processes at all levels is through the provision of information about electoral processes. This is particularly important for women, who tend to have less access to public spaces, meetings and civic events, and as a result have less information on elections and candidate registration of poll locations. In the United Republic of Tanzania, as a positive reaction to the District Commission, use of radio to persuade women to run for office, women's networks are encouraging them to stand for election.

Support to women parliamentarians

45. In Macedonia, Short Message Service (SMS) messages encouraged votes for women in the 2006 national elections and were considered to have contributed to the increased representation of women in the Macedonian Parliament.³⁴ From 2001 to 2004, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Dot-Gov initiative trained women political candidates in Morocco on ICT, with the specific aim of enabling them to become better-informed advocates and to mount more effective political campaigns.³⁵

46. The first global assessment of the use of ICT by parliaments mentioned gender as a component of the framework for the parliamentary contribution to democracy in two connections: the educational impact of websites and the cross-cutting issue of training programmes and advisory services.³⁶ One of the most interesting programmes designed for women politicians and legislators is the "International

³² K. Acharya, "Flaws in Bhoomi, India's model e-governance project" (Pune, India, 2003). Available from <http://archive.apnic.net/mailling-lists/s-asia-it/archive/2003/08/msg00027.html>; Rahul De', "The impact of Indian E-Government initiatives: issues of poverty and vulnerability reduction and conflict", In *Regional Development Dialogue*, vol. 27, No. 2, 2006, pp. 88-100. Available from http://www.unctd.org/jp/pub/rdd/rdd27_2.pdf.

³³ Gurumurthy, op. cit., 2006, p. 123.

³⁴ E. Lallana, *mGovernment and eDemocracy* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2007); visit also <http://www.mgovworld.org/resources/m-government-and-e-democracy>.

³⁵ United States Agency for International Development, "Country snapshot, Morocco in democracy and governance", 2004. Available from http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programmes/wid_snapshot/mc/morocco/morocco_dg.html.

³⁶ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, IPU and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *World e-Parliament Report 2008*, New York, 2008 (ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/124). Available from http://www.ictparliament.org/index.php?option=com_contact&task=view&contact_id=3&Itemid=1086.

Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOWpolitics)", an online workspace designed to serve the needs of elected officials, candidates, political party leaders and members, researchers, students and other practitioners interested in advancing women in politics.³⁷

Support to national machineries on gender equality and ICT

47. National machineries on gender equality and women in government tend to be underrepresented in the development of e-government strategies, in both G2E (Government-to-Employee) and G2C (Government-to-Citizen). A comparative review of a few official websites of African Governments found that gender and social ministries do not develop an active and updated Internet presence to the same extent that information technology, communications and science and technology ministries do.³⁸ A range of successful ICT strategies for national machineries on gender equality could include combining new technologies, such as computers and mobile phones, with traditional communication means, such as radio and print media.

Delivery of social services

48. The Socially Inclusive Governance for the Information Society Framework³⁹ recognizes the need to focus on e-programmes and policies which suit a range of groups so that the poor, women and those living in rural areas are able to benefit from the use of ICT and e-government services to gain social and economic empowerment. The Framework emphasizes the building of capacities while reducing inequalities in life opportunities and deprivations of income, illiteracy, morbidity, persecution, security and lack of social choice. E-government can be an important tool for achieving national development, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the Beijing Platform for Action goals when e-government programmes are designed in ways that make them relevant to women. Effective strategies use a range of technologies which will fit local contexts, including appropriate infrastructure, cost, women's daily schedules and socially accepted interaction.

Increasing food security and agricultural information

49. Governments in many countries are setting up SMS and telephone answering services with agricultural information and marketing for farmers. In India, information kiosks collect, digitize and upload agricultural information on a local website.⁴⁰ The Crops Research Institute of Ghana, working with women farmer groups, found out that older ICT such as radio and audio cassette recordings, when combined with learning networks such as farmer radio forums and use of agricultural information centres, increased women farmers' access to agricultural information.⁴¹

³⁷ See <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/en>.

³⁸ Huyer, *op. cit.*, 2007.

³⁹ *Global E-Government Readiness Report 2005: from E-Government to E-inclusion* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 06.H.H.2).

⁴⁰ National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, MANAGE. Available from www.manage.gov.in.

⁴¹ Collins Nkrumah, "Promoting access to agricultural information by women farmers: using information and communication technology". Presented at the Fifth Par Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, 13-18 July 2008 (Commonwealth of Learning, London, 2008).

Providing health services and information

50. E-Health services can contribute in situations where there is a lack of specialized staff, shortage of medical expertise (particularly in rural areas), limited access to medical education and scarce data on health-related issues. They also have the potential of helping women and men to understand their own health, including prevention and dealing with health concerns, through the packaging and dissemination of easy-to-understand health information in a variety of media. A study of 70 countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa found a significant correlation between telephone and television density and reducing malaria deaths. Telephones can help by providing connections to larger social networks and facilitating rapid diagnosis and treatment, while television can provide disease prevention awareness among the population, encourage people to adopt healthy behaviour and communicate risk mitigation actions.⁴² Many examples of the use of mobile phones to disseminate and collect health-related information do exist in various developing countries, as illustrated above.

E-Learning in and for improving e-Government

51. ICT-enabled education has great potential for increasing educational opportunities for women at all levels, in both formal and non-formal educational environments. It can provide flexible access arrangements and study times and encourage interaction and networking with peers and teachers. It can also improve the outreach towards women in rural areas and in the workplace while contributing to lifelong learning. ICT can also expand access to training programmes in gender, from basic online courses on leadership, health, and violence⁴³ to postgraduate programmes on gender and public policies, development, economy and gender studies.⁴⁴ The growing prevalence of computers in primary schools and use of Web 2.0 applications offer excellent opportunities for motivating girls and young women to participate in social networks, develop advanced ICT skills and produce and share content out of their own experience.

Promoting women's rights and fighting violence against women

52. Public administration frameworks can take advantage of ICT as a tool for promoting and monitoring the rights of women. Governments can use ICT to help

⁴² P. Mozumde and A. Marathe, "Role of information and communication networks in malaria survival", in *Malaria Journal* (2007), vol. 6, p. 136, see also <http://www.malariajournal.com/content/6/1/136>.

⁴³ In Latin America and the Caribbean, e-learning courses aim at empowering women for social and political participation and developing gender-sensitive science and technology education. They are given by the UNESCO Regional Chair on Women and Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean in cooperation with the Organization of American States (www.catunescomujer.org). A virtual Master's Programme on Gender and Public Policies has been online since 2001 at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in Argentina (www.prigepp.org). The website of the Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer from Spain provides e-learning modules for self-training on gender topics such as gender indicators, equality laws, gender and health, assessment of gender impacts and non-sexist administrative language.

⁴⁴ Gloria Bonder, "La formación en estudios de género para la intervención en políticas públicas: el valor de la experiencia para la innovación". In Estefanía Molina Busayón and Nava San Miguel (Coords.), *Universidad, Género y Desarrollo. Estudios en Género y Desarrollo. Balance y Propuestas* (Madrid, UAM Ediciones, 2009).

protect women and girls from trafficking and other abuses by verifying information, through the Internet or phone communication, about employment opportunities abroad and visa requirements, by providing access to legitimate job announcements, and by making direct contacts with potential employers. New information technologies can serve as tools to help find people who have disappeared, allowing the rapid exchange of information among concerned groups. Website and e-mail lists provide resources, information and support for the targets of security abuses, and also monitor and expose the activities of perpetrators and stalkers.⁴⁵

53. Public administrations can also use ICT as an effective public consultation mechanism. In India, an e-discussion on the implementation of a new Domestic Violence Act helped the women's organizations to formulate a Memorandum for the Ministry of Women and Child Development.⁴⁶ In the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, the Public Health Engineering Department of Pakistan introduced a community-based water and sanitation project that used video technology to effectively address gender issues and include women in the design and planning processes.⁴⁷

Supporting women's livelihoods and employment opportunities

54. The use of ICT to support women's livelihoods is an area where e-governance can make a noticeable difference in improving the profits, quality and efficiency of women's small, micro and medium enterprises. Mobile commerce (m-Commerce) via cell phones is becoming a major business driver in Africa, as well as in other regions, and poses particular opportunities for women who can access mobiles more readily than other forms of ICT. E- and m-commerce can improve communication with customers and suppliers and save time and travel costs as well as increase profits, while acting as conduits for training and information on markets, products and pricing in different areas. Mobile phone and small-scale ICT support can increase the productivity and efficiency of small, micro and medium enterprises through the support of trade and business operations; access to clients and suppliers; access to auction sites to buy and sell products, and even access to financial resources and credit through m-banking. Other potential business support services via mobile devices include access to toll-free directories for online databases with information on suppliers and distribution channels, competition, potential partners and export possibilities.⁴⁸

55. When targeted at women, computer-based training activities can support women both by providing training on business management as well as by teaching them how to use the Internet and ICT to improve production and marketing and to increase cross-border trade opportunities. ICT-based small, micro and medium enterprise training programmes targeted at women and women's groups are

⁴⁵ Huyer et al., op. cit., 2005.

⁴⁶ Heather Creech et al., "Evaluation of UNESCO's community multimedia centres" (Final report, 2006). Available from http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=22129&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html; and <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/en/Impact-Stories/Curbing-Domestic-Violence.html>.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Wickett cited in Angela Thas, Chat Ramilo Garcia and Cheekay Cinco, *Gender and ICT: e-Primers for the Information Economy, Society and Policy* (Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme, Bangkok, 2007).

⁴⁸ See "We've Gone Mobile!", Government of Canada. Available from http://www.canada.gc.ca/mobile/tut_c-eng.html.

important for encouraging women to find information on ICT productivity tools and technologies and to promote the use of new technologies for new enterprises.

56. Mobile-to-mobile information and trade services provide accessible market information to cut out the middleman. A rural women's producer group in the United Republic of Tanzania receives regular information on markets through their mobile phones. This information is posted daily on a village bulletin board. The producers are now able to work directly with processors and traders to investigate markets far beyond their traditional immediate trading partners. As a result, price transparency and profits have increased all along the market chain.

57. The Government of the Republic of Korea encourages the use of ICT by women farmers through on-site and mobile computer education and technical support services. Real-time information on market prices is posted on the website, which also operates a shopping mall for agricultural products.⁴⁹ The Kyonggi Province Programme for Women Information Technology Professionals provides training and lifelong education for women tailored to the different stages of women's lives.⁵⁰ Unemployed women, women heads of households and women living with disabilities who want to enter the workforce are trained in business incubation and capacity-building.⁵¹

58. The relatively new feature of using mobile phones for cash transfers provides a great spur to women's micro and small-scale enterprise development, particularly in Africa. Users do not need bank accounts; they buy digital funds at an agent and send that cash to any other mobile phone users in Kenya through a SMS. The phone becomes an electronic wallet, holding up to 500 euros. For women, the advantages of m-payments are having safer and less expensive ways to receive and send remittances.

59. Other economic impacts include additional savings for women who are mobile phone users and more money for their own use in the bank.⁵² Mobile phones also have the additional advantage for women of circumventing cultural norms that restrict their movements, as well as the people and places they can visit, not only in the social but also in their economic spheres. In highly segregated communities, where women may be forbidden to speak directly with men, mobile phones can enable female business owners restricted by religious norms to expand their businesses without male assistance.⁵³

V. Policy recommendations

60. Women and men need to have equal opportunities to participate in the construction of e-government architecture, and in monitoring and assessing its

⁴⁹ Thas et al., op. cit., 2007.

⁵⁰ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Moving Beijing Forward: gaps and challenges*. High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Its Regional and Global Outcomes (Bangkok, 2004).

⁵¹ Thas et al., op. cit., 2007.

⁵² Lee, op. cit., 2009.

⁵³ Kazanka Comfort and John Dada, "Women's use of cell phones to meet their communication needs: a study of rural women from northern Nigeria". In Ineke Buskens and Anne Webb, *African Women & ICTs: Investigating Technology, Gender and Empowerment* (Pretoria, Zed Books/International Development Research Centre (IDRC), London, 2009).

development. Two statements help to illustrate the contextual meaning of the recommendations that follow:

"The design of public policies should take into account that access to ICT is a moving target, given that the cycle of innovation ... is short and the diffusion curves of technological solutions follow quickly one after another. ... Public intervention is necessary but difficult and complex, given the characteristics of the technology and the shortcomings of government itself."⁵⁴

"... e-government services [do] not necessarily equate with the civic empowerment of women. For real empowerment through e-democracy, local people must have the opportunity for input and feedback on government policies."⁵⁵

61. Gender mainstreaming is not a new strategy for achieving gender equality. Since the inclusion of this measure in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, all entities of the United Nations system and multilateral organizations, as well as many national States and institutions, adopted it and made advances towards its implementation. In its report for 1997, the Economic and Social Council noted that "mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" is "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels."⁵⁶ Moreover,

"It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."⁵⁶

62. That agreed conclusion stressed that the United Nations system should take responsibility for institutionalizing gender mainstreaming in cooperation with Member States through concrete steps, mechanisms and processes in all parts of the United Nations system and locate it at the highest levels. It also affirmed that the successful translation of this strategy into practice requires a clear political will and the allocation of adequate and, if need be, additional human and financial resources from all available funding sources. Since then guidelines, manuals, tools and studies have been produced with the aim of helping to bring about its full comprehension and implementation.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, *Public Policies for the Development of Information Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Santiago, 2005).

⁵⁵ E. Rathgeber, *Engendering E-Government in Developing Countries* (Ottawa, eGov Monitor, 2006). Available from <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/5866>.

⁵⁶ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, sect. A, agreed conclusions 1997/2.

⁵⁷ Among them UNDP, *Gender Mainstreaming Learning and Information Packs*. Available from http://www.undp.org/women/doc/vGM_INFOPACK_GenderAnalysis1.doc; and World Bank, "Resources on Gender". Available from http://web.worldbank.org/WEB/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0_contentMDK21358556-menuPK3851633-pagePK210058-pPK210062-theSitePK336868,00.html

6.3. Although some work has been done on gender issues in good governance,¹⁹ gender mainstreaming in e-government is still a fairly new area that needs to be more consistently addressed through research, creation of methodologies and tools, training and monitoring in order to understand its particularities and so as to effectively intervene.

6.4. Recommendations concerning the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into e-government include:

- A strong commitment by national and local governments to design, through participatory approaches, e-government programmes, websites and services that are available and responsive to the needs and opinions of both women and men from all social and economic sectors, in addition to consultative and monitoring mechanisms.
- Awareness at all levels of e-government planning and policymaking about the social benefits of gender mainstreaming through ICT policies and programmes.
- Development of national ICT policies that ensure the participation of women, gender experts and women's organizations at all stages of the planning and implementation process, as well as awareness and consultation.
- Widespread use of needs assessments, sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators.
- Enactment of sector policies and use of action plans to track and monitor their implementation, ensuring adequacy of resources allocated to them.
- Design, implementation and maintenance by Governments of an enabling environment for the formulation and systematic assessment of gender-sensitive e-government policies, including the appropriate legal, regulatory and institutional arrangements.²⁰
- Implementation of cross-jurisdictional coordination to improve gender mainstreaming across the actions of public administration institutions.
- Involvement of national machineries on gender equality to incorporate ICT more effectively into administrative procedures as well as in the interaction with stakeholders, and to enlarge their understanding of ICT added-value for the development of agendas and policies.
- Linking public administration reform strategies and programmes to e-government strategies and ensuring that they engage both women and men stakeholders and civil servants in their design and implementation.
- Increasing regional and international interactions and collaborative work between governments, networks, non-governmental organizations and universities involved in gender and ICT-related issues.

¹⁹ For example, by the World Bank. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/BriefingNoteGenderGovernance.pdf>.

²⁰ The generic parameters for the creation of such enabling environments were already defined, among others, in the intergovernmental processes resulting from the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995.

- Encouraging governmental bodies, particularly those responsible for education, to promote the access of women to careers in science and technology and to implement gender-sensitive e-learning programmes and courses within a framework of lifelong and participatory education.

65. The design of e-government policies could include:

- Utilization of a "human-centred systems design" of e-government sites based on the inputs of women and men from different social circumstances.
- Dissemination of information on national and local e-government services among women of rural and poor areas and support for access to ICT and their proper use.
- Creation of and support for convenient, affordable and safe telecentres where women can obtain gender-sensitive digital literacy training (from basic to more advanced uses), build networks at local and national levels and gain skills for expanding employment prospects and developing competitive entrepreneurship in the knowledge economy.

66. E-government sites should:

- Include gender appropriate and attractive contents, use non-sexist language and promote user awareness of gender stereotypes and violent and discriminatory messages on the Internet.
- Present a realistic image of women's potential in the use and creation of technology.
- Create opportunities for women to acquire skills for the advanced uses of ICT.
- Provide e-learning activities or modules for improving citizens' knowledge of human rights, gender equity and to promote the strategic use of ICT for community development, women's small, micro and medium enterprises and other development needs.
- Apply not only high-end technologies but also a variety of technology options to meet the needs of all users.

67. Monitoring gender mainstreaming approaches in e-governance:

- E-governance policies should be monitored to assess their impact on women and men and to determine whether they promote equal access to opportunities and resources. Possible indicators include: sex-disaggregated data of online voters' registration and sex-disaggregated data of e-users of e-government sites and mobile services.
- Measures should be taken to monitor the representation of women and men in government institutions at national and local levels and across a range of programme areas (including both their relative numbers and the positions they hold).

68. Funding gender mainstreaming approaches in e-governance:

- Mobilization of funding from governments, international agencies and donors to transform isolated ICT-based gender equality initiatives into national and regional mainstreamed policies.

69 Research into gender mainstreaming approaches in e-governance:

- The United Nations is encouraged to carry out research on case studies, gather lessons learned towards gender impact analysis and map the existing institutional and human resources working in gender and ICT in all regions.

70 The gender divide needs to be addressed through integrated approaches that take into account economic, social and cultural factors, including the cultural and social biases with reference to the application of ICT.

71 Recognition by Governments, as part of their wider policies of inclusion, of the importance of incorporating gender equality in ICT as a key factor to promoting women's equal access to ICT tools. This will help to reduce overlapping gendered social relationships, gender discrimination and gender-blind ICT policy processes, which undermine women's access to opportunities in the emerging information society. It will also increase the potential of ICT to become an effective tool for the promotion of gender equality.